Community vs. Diversity

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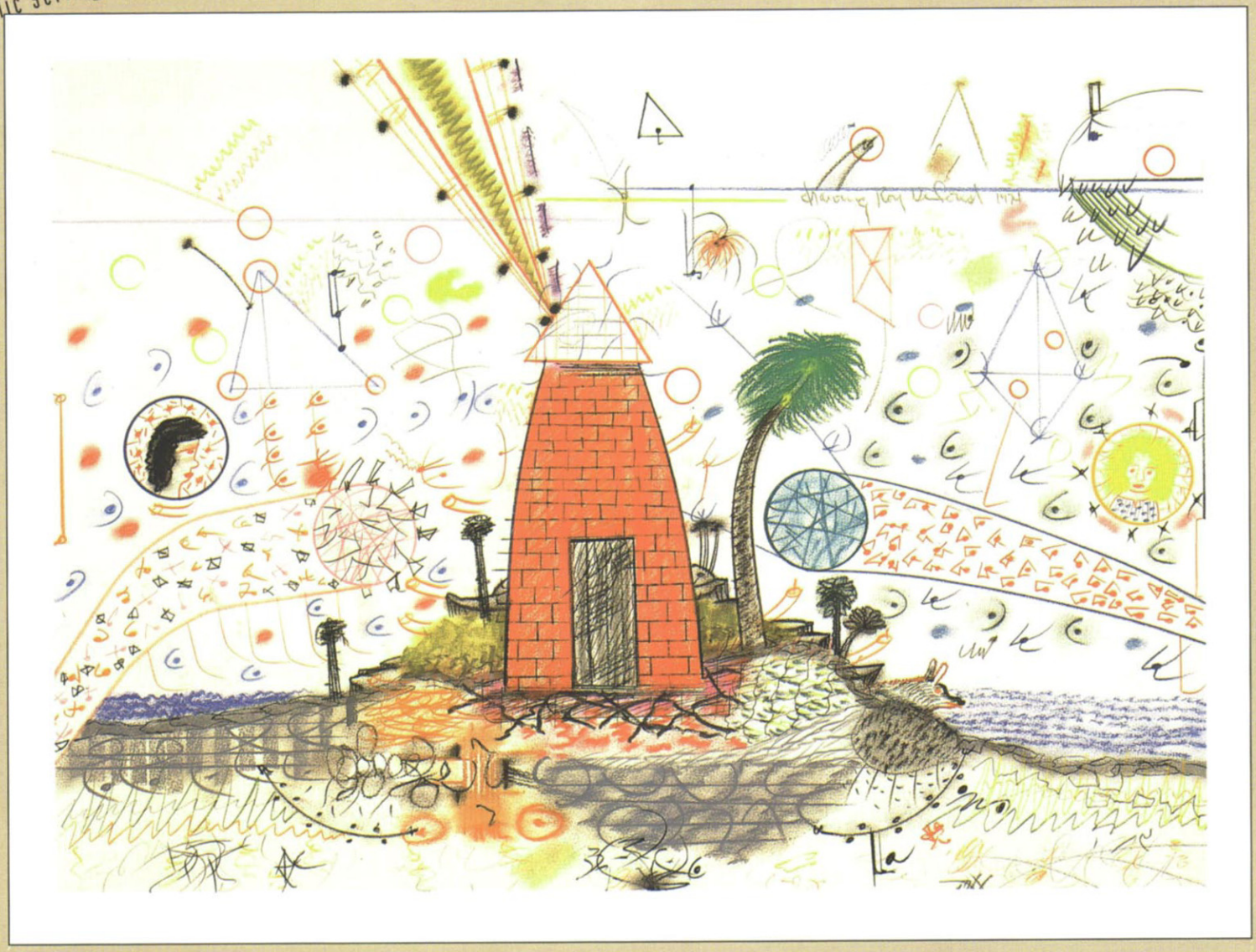
California JOURNAL

Independent analysis of politics and government

1970 25 1995 Public Service Journalism



Inside:

Speakership battle
Orange County's troubles
Wilson's second term

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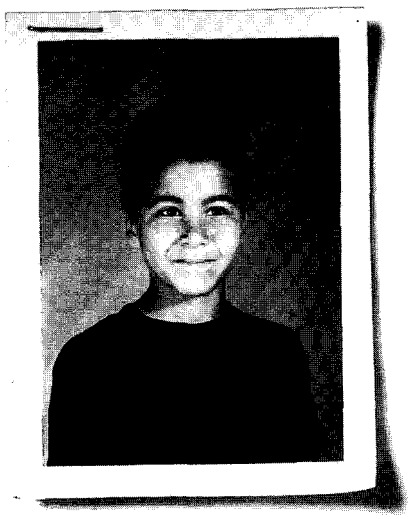

Joey is doing a report on Eskimos. Where does he go for information?

- ☐ those old encyclopedias in the attic
- ☐ Mom and Dad
- ☐ an Eskimo

The e-mail address is *elsie@artic.nsbsd.k12.ak.us*. That gets Joey to Barrow, Alaska, and to Elsie Itta, a North Alaskan Iñupiaq Eskimo. Elsie has danced the Eskimo Dance many times to celebrate Nalukataq and the season's whales. She makes huge batches of caribou soup. The words "fifteen below" don't scare her. However, she has a car, not a dog sled, and wears running shoes as often as mukluks.

Joey can talk to Elsie because of a new Pacific Bell program called Education First.

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Metro Investment Report

Transportation Funding Seminar

Friday, February 10, 1995
L.A. Area Chamber of Commerce Headquarters
350 S. Bixel, Los Angeles

Co-Sponsors: MTA, J.P. Morgan, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, Californians for Better Transportation, Central City Association

Program

7:30 - 7:55 Registration

8:00 - 8:15 Welcoming Remarks, David Abel, Publisher, *Metro Investment Report*
Supervisor Michael Antonovich* and Mayor Richard Riordan*

8:15 - 9:25 **Today's Transportation Budget Reality**
Panel One
Moderator: Don McIntyre, President, Central City Association
Presenter: Louise Stoll, U.S. DOT Assistant Secretary for Budget & Programs
Responders: Zev Yaroslavsky, Supervisor, Los Angeles County
Mark Watts, California Undersecretary for Transportation
Judy Wilson, MTA Executive Officer for Planning and Programming

9:30 - 10:40 **Funding Transportation's Capital & Operation Needs Through the Decade**
Panel Two
Moderator: Melinda Luedtke, J.P. Morgan
Presenter: Bud Shuster*, Chair, U.S. House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
Responders: Richard Katz, California Assembly, Transportation Committee
Larry Zarian, Chair, MTA Finance, Budget & Efficiency Committee
Yvonne Brathwaite-Burke*, Supervisor, Los Angeles County

10:40 - 10:50 Coffee Break

10:50 - 12:00 **Innovative Partnerships in Transportation Funding: The Role of Business and the Public Sector**
Panel Three
Moderator: Matt Fong, California State Treasurer
Presenters: Hank Dittmar, Executive Director, Surface Transportation Policy Project
Robert Poole, President, Reason Foundation
Responders: Norm Ross, Chair, Central City Association, Infrastructure Committee
Rae James, Deputy Mayor, City of Los Angeles
Ron Lamb, Executive Director, Greater L.A. Area Transportation Coalition
Michael George, J.P. Morgan

12:00 - 1:55 Luncheon

Luncheon Address: "A Call for An Action Consensus"
Franklin E. While, Chief Executive Officer, MTA
Responder: Dan Garcia*, Executive Vice President, Warner Brothers

Seminar Cost $255 ($85 for MIR Subscribers/Co-Sponsor Board Members)
Metro Investment Report (213) 629-9019, Fax (213) 623-9207

(*Indicates invited)

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FEBRUARY 1995
VOLUME XXVI, NUMBER 2

California JOURNAL

Independent analysis of politics and government

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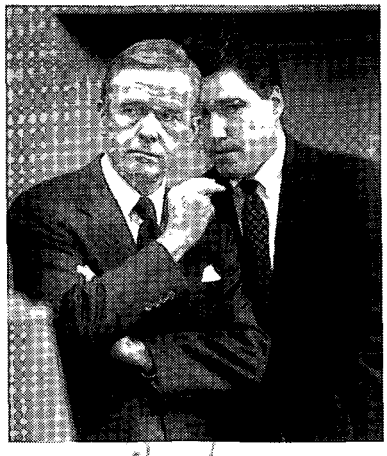

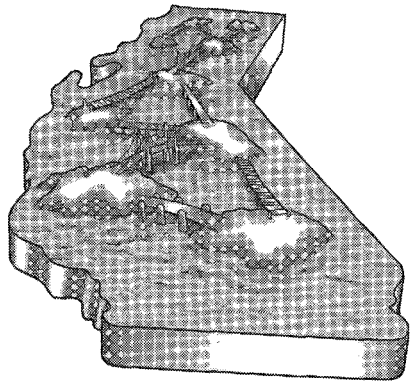

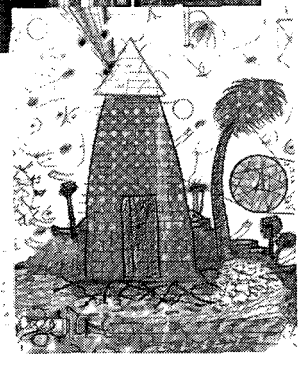

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Up Front

UMBRAGE

Raise thy staff. The Capitol air filled with huzzahs, war whoops and hoopdedoos last month, all centered on the speakership battle (see page 8). Democrats, especially, befogged the atmosphere with high-sounding proclamations about protecting the poor, afflicted and oppressed from those nasty right-wing Republicans. In reality, "poor, oppressed and afflicted" meant Democratic staff. Back in November, less than two weeks after the Democratic disaster at the polls, it has been reported that 44 staffers received annual pay raises of from 5 percent to 10 percent. Nearly half were on the roster of Assembly Majority Services as of October 1994. According to a list obtained by *CJ*, the highest raises — both in percent increase and dollars — went to the poobahs of Majority Services: Director Gale Kaufman, (10 percent, or $9818); and Deputy Directors Bill Cavala (10 percent, or $8317) and Sam Walton (10 percent, or $7529). The 44 raises totaled $164,401.

Anybody home? If you're a newly elected legislator, one of your first duties is to set up a district office; you know, a place where your constituents may find you at any given moment if they have a problem that must be solved. With this in mind, Assemblyman Tom Bordonaro (R-San Luis Obispo) toured his AD 33 with an aide, looking for just the right spot. His requirements: a stand-alone building, not in a professional area, that was unpretentious and comfortable. After hours of fruitless search, Bordonaro found a perfect little bungalow across the street from the San Luis Obispo County courthouse. Although a small "for lease" placard graced the lawn, there were no other signs to indicate what the building might have been used for in the past. Bordonaro quickly called the real estate agent from his cellular phone, identified himself and announced that he wanted the property immediately. According to Bordonaro, the realtor hesitated. "Well, sure," the assemblyman recalled the agent as saying, "but Mr. Huffington doesn't have to be out until December 12th." The unidentified house had been Michael Huffington's district office. "I couldn't believe he didn't have any signs out," said Bordonaro. "It was like he didn't want people to know he was there." Bordonaro since has set up shop in Huffington's former digs.

New career? The Planning and Conservation League invited a former state senator to address its recent confab in Sacramento on the subject of political and campaign finance reform. It was a new departure for the former lawmaker, who spoke from experience in marking his initial foray as a crusading pundit. The lawmaker? Alan Robbins. The message? Watch out for those mean old lobbyists who lure and unsuspecting legislators into the Dark Side.

View from Mars. When the Assembly finally returned for some debate on organizing the house, members used the occasion to vent a lot of hot air pent up since the last time Republicans, Democrats and independent gathered for a similar debate back in December. And the most surreal comments? Those by Willie Brown Jr. (D-San Francisco), who insisted — with a straight face — that Republicans and Democrats have shared equally in staff resources during his tenure (Majority Services and the former speaker's own staff apparently were left out of the equation); and by Richard Katz (D-Sepulveda), who insisted that committee staff isn't partisan. If that's the case, why do so many Democratic members list committee consultants as personal staff in various publications and rosters.

Residency. A special election to replace former Senator Marian Bergeson (R-Newport Beach) in District 35 has been set for March 14th, and the results of that election may affect the seemingly endless squabble over the speakership (see page 8). One of the candidates in that election is former Assemblyman Gil Ferguson (R-Newport Beach), who chose not to seek reelection to the Assembly last year in anticipation of his run for the Senate. But two other lawmakers also are potential candidates in SD 35: Doris Allen (R-Cypress) and Ross Johnson (R-Fullerton). If Allen wins the Senate seat, she would be in the same pickle as Dick Mountjoy (R-Monrovia), who was elected last fall to both the Assembly and Senate. She would have to time her jump to the Senate so as not to jeopardize the Republicans in whatever power-sharing arrangement eventually emerges in the Assembly. Johnson, however, poses a trickier problem. Johnson's Assembly district is not a part of SD 35; it is nested in SD 33. So Johnson is not a resident of SD 35. The state Constitution, however, requires that candidates for the Legislature live in the district they want to represent. Thus, to run in SD 35, Johnson must move. That move means that Johnson no longer resides in the Assembly district he represents. If so, does he still meet constitutional requirements for membership in the Assembly? If he doesn't meet those requirements, are Democrats justified in seeking his immediate removal.

"The principle on which this country was founded and by which it has always been governed is that Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race and ancestry. A good American is one who is loyal to this country and to our creed of liberty and democracy."

— Franklin Roosevelt

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There's not a level playing field. Gas utilities are still burdened with many social obligations: to provide special rates to low income consumers, keep prices down artificially, and comply with all kinds of California state regulatory requirements. Interstate pipelines are immune to such pressures as they need answer only to a federal agency with different rules.

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Willie Brown's

Long-time speaker's latest miracle staves off GOP takeover

By Steve Scott

The 1945 Humphrey Bogart classic "To Have and Have Not" featured a recurring query which may well have run through the minds of film buffs in the Assembly Republican Caucus this past month or two. Eddie, Bogart's selectively absent-minded sidekick played by Walter Brennan, would interrupt conversations involving someone he hadn't met before to pose a seemingly incongruous question.

"Was you ever bit by a dead bee?"

Eddie would expand on his line of inquiry by explaining that anyone who isn't careful where they walk could be stung just as easily by a dead bee as a live one, especially if the bee was angry when it died. "I bet I've been bit a hundred times that way," he'd muse.

If anyone knows the experience of being "bit by a dead bee," it is Assembly Republican Leader Jim Brulte (R-Rancho Cucamonga). Last November 9th, the day after the 1994 election, Brulte was being hailed as a genius after an eight-seat pickup which gave the Republicans 41 of the 80 seats in the Assembly. One month later, he was derided as "the man who couldn't count straight," unable to claim the leadership mantle which had so easily passed into the hands of his Washington, D.C., counterpart, Newt Gingrich.

Who was the "dead bee" that bit Brulte? Only the same killer bee who's been stinging the GOP as speaker for the last 14 years — Willie Lewis Brown Jr. With the help of one Republican defector, Diamond Bar Assemblyman Paul Horcher, Brown achieved the closest thing to a genuine *coup d'etat* since the Bear Flag Republic. Seizing the gavel and ignoring a range of legal opinions, Brown engineered the ouster of Assemblyman Richard Mountjoy. Then, with 40 votes, had himself installed, once again, as speaker.

"If you look and check his ancestry, you'd find Houdini in there somewhere," said Assemblyman Richard Mountjoy (R-Monrovia).

In retrospect, the storm signals for Republicans were evident even in the "high-fiving" afterglow of their stunning election triumph. Though he voted for Brulte for GOP leader, Horcher hinted he might run for speaker himself, a dig at the man with whom he'd had a running feud. Brown, meanwhile, insisted publicly that he hadn't been deposed yet. "I don't think anybody else has 41," he maintained. Most observers considered the seemingly-deposed speaker to be in a state of post-election denial. What those observers didn't know was that Brown had already been contacted by Horcher, who, Brown later said, promised to support him.

In a bid to ratchet up the uncertainty, Brown called the outgoing Democrat-controlled Assembly into an unprecedented lame-duck session in late November, to pass a rule allowing staff members to be paid if the December 5th speakership vote ended in a 40-40 tie. Republicans went along with the rule, all the while insisting it was a meaningless gesture since, in their minds, it was already won. Democrats, meanwhile, continued to stir the pot.

"For those who don't know how things change," warned Assemblyman Richard Katz (D-Sepulveda), "I suggest they talk to 'Speaker Berman,' 'Speaker Condit,' 'Speaker Peace,' or 'Speaker Calderon.'" The four referenced — former Assemblymen Howard Berman, Gary Condit, Steve Peace and Charles Calderon — were all, at one time or another, rivals of Brown's for the speakership.

The day of the big vote — December 5th — broke

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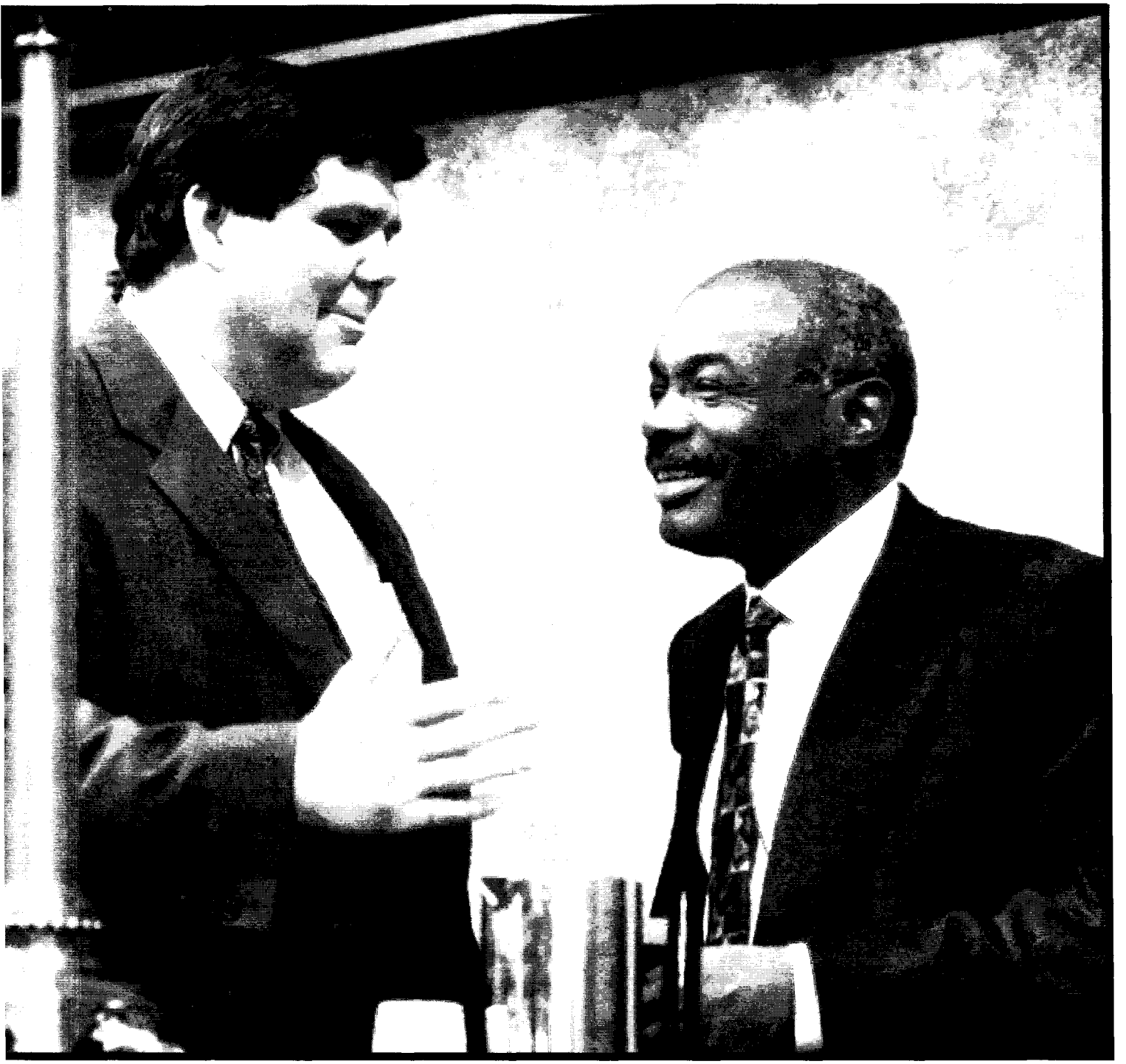
Magic Act



Photos by Rich Pedroncelli

Jim Brulte and Willie Brown Jr.

ominously for Brulte when Horcher failed to show up for a morning caucus meeting. Brulte later insisted he'd been assured by Horcher's chief-of-staff that "Paul will be with you." Brulte, however, only had the word of an intermediary. Brown had it from Horcher's mouth — Brulte only had 40, not 41. With a tie guaranteed, the wily Democratic leader began plotting strategy for his ultimate objective: total victory.

When the organizational session was convened, Democrats tried repeatedly to gain recognition for a motion to oust Mountjoy, who had won a state Senate special election on the same day he'd won re-election to the Assembly. While he'd already moved his shop to the Senate side, Mountjoy's vote

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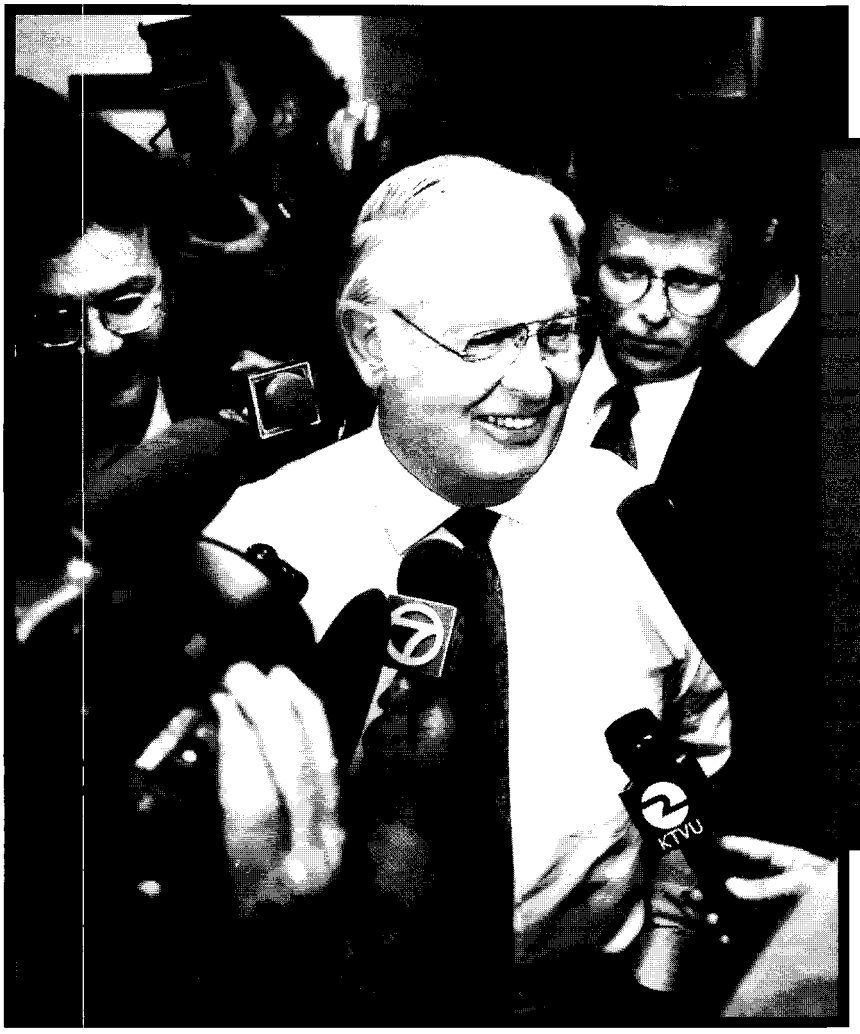
was needed to secure Brulte's speakership. Democrats claimed that, as an elected senator, Mountjoy had forfeited his right to sit in the Assembly. If the motion was granted, Mountjoy would be disqualified from voting on his own qualifications. The result: ouster by a vote of 40-39. With Mountjoy out, Willie wins.

But the Democrats' efforts were turned back by Chief Clerk E. Dotson Wilson who, by law, is the person charged with conducting the vote for speaker. Wilson, appointed to his job by Brown over Republican objections, cited the state Government Code in ruling that no other business could happen until a speaker was chosen.



Richard Mountjoy

Brown and Brulte were nominated for the job, and a voice vote was taken alphabetically. All proceeded more or less normally until Horcher's name was called. With television and still cameras clicking and whirring, Horcher yelled a full-throated "Brown!" then slammed his fist on his desk. The collective gasp from those watching in the Assembly chambers couldn't have been more pronounced if Horcher had mooned them. The renegade legislator later issued a news release, announcing he had switched his party registration from Republican to independent.

"We had one political whore today, and he was a Republican," said a disgusted Assemblyman Trice Harvey (R-Bakersfield).

In the hubbub that ensued after the vote, the cagy former speaker nearly sneaked in again, getting GOP agreement on a seemingly innocuous, but carefully worded motion to allow "the business of the house to proceed." Once again, however, Wilson stopped the power play, putting the matter to the house for a vote which ultimately kept the ouster from proceeding. The stress of standing up to Brown's maneuver was so great that Wilson wound up in the hospital that night, and didn't report for work the next day. With Wilson out sick, the gavel fell to the senior member of the Assembly.

Guess who?

With Willie Brown slated to sit in the chair, it didn't take a genius to see what was coming. So while Democrats convened session the next day, Republicans left the building and holed themselves up in a hotel conference room across the street from the Capitol. With no Republicans, Brown lacked the quorum needed to oust Mountjoy and complete his takeover. Eventually, the Republican boycott forced an end to the organizational session.

Paul Horcher

Why did Horcher bolt? The assemblyman maintains he was standing up to the right wing of the Republican caucus. "I was tired of Republican bosses telling me how to vote," he said.

Most who know the unpredictable Horcher point to another, more personal reason for the switch: payback. Horcher had been an outcast among Assembly Republicans almost from the time he arrived, because of his ties with Brown and the California Trial Lawyers Association. He accepted the vice-chairmanship of Assembly Ways and Means against the wishes of the caucus, and was the subject of a censure move, ultimately blocked by Brulte, at last year's state GOP convention.

Republicans claim Horcher's loner status in the caucus had more to do with his own stand-offishness than any intentional hazing. But if Horcher was uncomfortable before, that was nothing compared with what happened after he

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deserted the party. Within days of his vote, Republican activists in his district — among them former Los Angeles County Supervisor Pete Schabarum — organized a recall against him. The state Republican Party's leadership also formed a "Committee to Replace Willie Brown" which started raising money to recall not only Horcher, but a half-dozen Democrats in marginal districts.

Brulte, who'd come out of the December 5th debacle breathing fire, seemed at first to like the blanket recall strategy. "We went out and waxed them [last November]," he boasted. "If we have to go out and fight six recall battles, we'll wax them there, too." He later backed away from supporting recalls against Democrats, but continued to encourage the Horcher effort, and publicly accused Brown of "engaging in the political equivalent of jury tampering." So direct and personal an attack against Brown was a departure for Brulte, who had discouraged the traditional GOP tactic of making the one-time speaker an election target. But if Brulte's tactics had shifted, a far more remarkable transformation affected his rival.

Meet Willie Brown, the "transitional" speaker.

In a massive personal public relations campaign, Brown painted himself as the potential broker of a bipartisan compromise. He talked up a variety of power-sharing ideas, including a joint leadership system which proved successful in Michigan. Perhaps most surprisingly, he began to proffer the suggestion that the final compromise could include a formal end to the Willie Brown speakership. By late December, Brown had offered up a series of power-sharing principles that would have vested all of the speaker's power in the an evenly-divided Assembly Rules Committee. Brulte also offered a compromise, which promised proportional representation on committees and roughly equal distribution of the Assembly's budget resources.

When the first official day of the new session — January 4th —arrived, the archness of the previous month seemed momentarily to have given way to an air of compromise. After a marathon caucus which one member described as "real emotional," Republicans signed off on Brown's speakerless power-sharing idea, with the proviso that it stay in place only until they can recall Horcher and claim 41 votes. By the end of the day, it seemed to be a done deal, and Brown was sounding wistful about the end of his speakership. "It has been a great honor for 14 years to do this ... but at some point that comes to an end," he mused. "This may be that point."

The deal might have gone through had lawmakers not decided to sleep on it. By the next day, however, Democrats were holding out for a two-year agreement and an end to all recalls, including Horcher's. Brulte balked, saying he wouldn't "negotiate away a Republican speakership." The Democrats' hesitation may have had something to do with the emergence of another wayward Republican. Conservative Chico Assemblyman Bernie Richter seemed an unlikely contender for Democratic votes for speaker, given his active involvement in efforts to end all state affirmative action laws. Still, when he came to Democrats offering a two-year deal with a better deal on staff and committee assignments, Democrats decided to play another hand. A week talking up the Richter option ended when the legislative Black and Latino caucuses balked, and Republicans presented a united front against his efforts.

When Richter's star faded, it was back to the negotiating table, but those talks bogged down in a dispute over the length of any deal and what, if any, leadership role Brown might have. Finally, Brown managed to line up all of the votes he needed to bounce Mountjoy.

A two-week lull ended explosively on a Monday night. Brown, still with his grip on the gavel, allowed the crucial motion Wilson had denied the month before, and Mountjoy's qualifications were before the floor. Mountjoy's dual status is "as improper as if someone signed up to run for two offices at the same time," said Assemblyman Louis Caldera (D-Los Angeles). After Richter himself scotched an effort to elect him speaker, Horcher and the Democrats voted to remove Mountjoy. Then, after a lengthy caucus, Democrats came back out and elected Brown speaker. Although they also pushed through new rules nearly identical to those proposed both by Brown and Brulte, the vanquished Republicans redeclared their recall war against marginal Democrats, among them Debra Bowen of Marina del Rey and Mike Machado of Stockton.

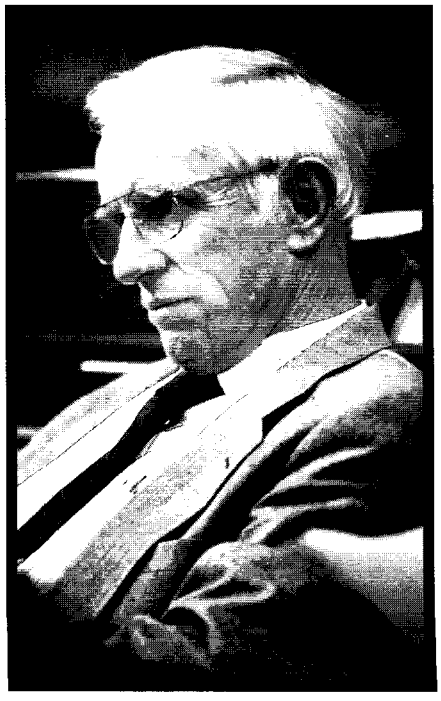
"None of you will have a place to hide," warned Assemblyman Ross Johnson (R-Fullerton). "Everyone in the state is going to know what you did and why." For their parts, Democrats defended the ouster of Mountjoy as a long overdue removal.

And what of Willie Brown, the magician who started all this fuss? Clearly, his plans for a two-year, farewell tour as speaker this session were destroyed by the election results. Any other leader suffering such dramatic losses would have been deposed in a twince. Brown, however, is not any other leader, as he proved by buying himself and his party influence they would not have enjoyed in a Republican-dominated Assembly.

"If [U.S. Representative Richard] Gephardt had done for the Democrats in Washington what Willie Brown is doing for the Democrats here, they'd be naming buildings after him," noted Katz.

For Californians who watch politics, this leadership fight is just another chapter in the long and diverting saga of a politician whom friend and foe agree plays the inside game better than anyone. Few know the pain of Willie Brown's stinger better than former Assemblyman Howard Ber-man, one of the men Brown outmaneuvered in 1980 to become speaker. Now occupying a safe Los Angeles congressional seat, Berman watched the events of the last month with bemused fascination and a feeling of *deja vu*.

"My already deep admiration for his skill and talent at getting and keeping that job continues to grow," he said. "I wish him well."



Bernie Richter

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Pete Wilson's second term

Pondering an approach: an ounce of prevention or a pound of cure

By Steve Scott and A.G. Block

Photos by Rich Pedroncelli

Back in the steamy August of 1951, baseball fans in New York City looked forward to yet another World Series played entirely within the confines of their sprawling metropolis. The New York Yankees were gliding toward what would become the third of five consecutive American League pennants, while the Dodgers from the borough of Brooklyn held a commanding lead in the National League.

New Yorkers were not disappointed, for the 1951 World Series was indeed an all-city affair. But the National League representative was not Brooklyn; it was the New York Giants, 13 games back on August 1st and poised for one of the greatest comebacks in sports history.

Well, the 1951 New York Giants have nothing on Peter Barton Wilson, 36th governor of California, whose re-election victory in 1994 was as convincing as it was improbable. A year ago, heading into the '94 campaign, Wilson was so far down in the polls that a "respectable showing" in November might be considered a 10-point loss to his eventual Democratic challenger, Treasurer Kathleen Brown. Wilson needed a neutron microscope to find his job-approval rating — 15 percent at one point in the spring of 1993, a performance more akin to another New York team of legend, the '62 Mets.

But Wilson came back from the adversity and the bad polls and the political obituaries, came all the way back to clobber Kathleen Brown and earn himself a second and final term as governor. He also earned for himself a spot on the national stage as an immediate contender for president of the United States.

Wilson's first term was marked by the kind of adversity that might make any sane individual question his career track. First, there were an unusual number of physical aches and pains — earthquakes, floods, riots and fires — that tortured every corner of the state. Worse were the fiscal ailments provoked by a lingering recession that dogged his administra-

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tion from day one: cash shortages, rising unemployment and welfare caseloads, expanding school and prison populations. But the Pete Wilson who took the reins of government in January 1991 looked out upon the state's ever-darkening fiscal landscape and proclaimed, of all things, hope and a novel approach to governing that emphasized prevention, especially for the state's youngest and most vulnerable citizens.

"Now more than ever, to lead is to choose," Wilson said during his 1991 State of the State address. "And our choice must be to give increasing attention and resources to the conditions that shape children's lives. The emphasis must be more preventive than remedial — a vision of government that is truly as uncomplicated as the old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

But that was 1991, and although Wilson made good on some of the promise of that first State of the State, his rhetoric changed over the course of his first term to the point that in 1993-94 he spoke less about prevention and more about remedies and punishment — punishing criminals, punishing illegal residents, punishing bad teachers, punishing long-term welfare recipients, punishing trial lawyers.

Now, however, the campaign is over and, thanks to term limits, Wilson is a lame duck with no immediate need to woo California voters. In addition, the California economy finally shows signs of recovery, with unemployment down, jobs up and better-than-anticipated revenues rolling into state coffers. So, which Wilson will take the lead in the second term — the "ounce of prevention governor" or the "pound of cure" governor? Or will some kind of mixture emerge?

Perhaps some clue is evident in the buzzwords of Wilson's recent inaugural week — "tough love." His inaugural address and 1995 State of the State both seemed to indicate that the Wilson administration will deal with welfare recipients, deadbeat dads and teenage mothers by forcing them to take responsibility for their lives rather than throwing money at them or at programs designed to prop them up.

Perhaps, too, there is a clue in Wilson's proposed across-the-board 15 percent tax cut, to be spread over the next three years. That proposal could signal that Wilson's second term might end before 1998, for a tax cut that broad and that imposing resonates beyond California. With a presidential election looming in 1996, Wilson's come-from-behind gubernatorial victory, coupled with a tax cut, places him in the first rank of GOP presidential contenders. No other potential Republican candidate for president has the power, or the bully pulpit, to take credit for a tax cut. Not Kansas Senator Bob Dole. Not Texas Senator Phil Gramm. Not Jack Kemp. Not even Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich. Nor does any other likely candidate — Republican or Democrat — have the ability to deliver California's 54 electoral votes as a native son.

The presidency could overshadow the entire first half of Wilson's new term. In 1996 California's presidential primary will be held in March rather than in June, placing it in the middle of the national scramble for convention delegates. And given the nature of the state's winner-take-all Republican primary, the governor could emerge with over 20 percent of the delegates needed to nominate — without lifting a finger elsewhere.

Meanwhile, Wilson has promised to "finish the job" in his second term, a reference to first-term efforts at reform of

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welfare, worker's compensation, and the state's tort and budgetary systems. It also is a reference to the enhancement of penalties for crimes such as car-jacking and drive-by shootings.

As with most Republicans, welfare was a special target for Wilson throughout his first term, but the results were more fiscal than structural. He was able to extract payment reductions from the Legislature for those who qualify for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and has continued that trend by requesting another 10 percent hit in 1995-96. Recipients on the dole longer than six months would see their payments reduced an additional 15 percent.

In addition to cash reductions, Wilson can be expected to push for tougher eligibility standards, such as a requirement that unwed teenage mothers identify the father of their children before being allowed to receive welfare. His recent State of the State also advanced the proposal that able-bodied welfare recipients be booted off welfare after two years. And his 1995-96 budget signaled that the state will not be as generous to the aged, blind and disabled, calling for an 8 percent reduction in SSI/SSP payments during this fiscal year.

Tort reform also ranks high on Wilson's reform list. Being bandied about are proposals to cap judgment awards, and an increasingly stringent threshold for determining what constitutes a frivolous lawsuit. In his 1995 State of the State, Wilson all but referred to lawyers as bloodsuckers responsible for the explosion of litigation clogging California courts. Coupled with tort reform is a further overhaul of the state's worker's compensation system. Although last year saw the governor and lawmakers tinker heavily with the system, it wasn't enough for the business community, which wants even more relief from stress-related claims and a stricter limitation on the extent and cost of vocational rehabilitation.

For the most part, the crime issue — in the form of three-strikes and illegal immigrants — drove Wilson's '94 re-election campaign. Domestic criminals won't drive his legislative agenda, however. Wilson can be expected to seek the death penalty for drive-by shooters and car-jackers, and the elimination of good-time credits for violent inmates. He also is expected to ask for stiffer sentences for parole violators, and there is not likely to be much meaningful opposition to any of it.

Illegal immigrants, on the other hand, pose a knot of problems for the Wilson administration, which must figure out how to implement provisions of Proposition 187 — the initiative passed last November that bars social, most medical and educational benefits to illegal residents. Federal courts have temporarily placed the measure on hold, pending the outcome of several lawsuits challenging its constitutionality, and resolution through the courts could take several years. If it goes forward, however, Wilson must devise a system for putting the law into effect, and he is especially vulnerable on this issue, given that he stumped loud and long for passage of Proposition 187. If implementation is too lax, he risks damage to his credibility and lays himself open to charges that he demagogued the issue for political gain, only to soft

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peddle it as an administrator. If it is too strict, he risks turning California into a police state whose doctors, nurses and teachers have become official snitches.

Education, shoved onto the back burner by crime and immigration in 1994, will emerge as a major issue once again during Wilson's second term. It is very likely that should he run for president, he will share the primary campaign with another scorched-earth conflict over vouchers. A voucher initiative, aimed at the March '96 ballot, is expected to be introduced next month. In the interim, Wilson has proposed streamlining the state's 7000-page Education Code by dispatching the current document into a trash basket and starting over. He also has issued a direct challenge to the powerful California Teachers' Association by suggesting in his State of the State that teacher tenure be abolished. Meanwhile, Wilson's new budget calls for full funding of K-12 education, including inflation and enrollment growth. Plus, for the first time in his governorship, Wilson has also proposed an additional increase — a modest $61 per student.

In the area of higher education, Wilson has yet to signal that the state's public colleges and universities will share in the emerging economic recovery. Although his recent budget proposal gave the University of California and California State University systems 2 percent increases in 1995-96, with promises of an additional 4 percent per year through 1998-99, there was no indication that student fees would be rolled back. Those fees rose precipitously during Wilson's first term, with justification laid at the door of the state's fiscal crisis. Not only that, but the governor's new budget proposes raising community college fees again this year by $2 per unit.

Wilson's second term also is expected to see further adjustments in the relationship between the state and local governments, termed "realignment." In his recent budget, for example, Wilson has proposed having the state pick up 70 percent of trial court funding, while shifting to cities and counties a quarter of the state's share of AFDC — a move that could cost counties as much as $240 million in 1995-96. Counties could mitigate that cost by availing themselves of mandate relief proposed also by Wilson.

And what about "preventive government?" Those close to the governor insist that he is as committed as ever. "There were a lot of things that circumstances prevented him from enacting during his first term," said Dan Schnur, Wilson's campaign communications director. "It stands to reason they're still top priorities." In an interview during the campaign, Wilson said he had not given up on his preventive agenda, but he no longer views it as something that should supercede remedial solutions.

"Yes, you should engage in prevention, and spend what is necessary to make it successful," Wilson said at the time. "That doesn't allow you to ignore the threat to your present existence."

And, of course, just because the state's fiscal outlook is brighter for the second term doesn't mean that Mother Nature plans to be any more cooperative with Pete Wilson. His second inaugural address — like the first one — was forced indoors by inclement weather. And his first official week of office was marked by some of the worst storms of this century, complete with mudslides, floods and 34 of California's 58 counties declared disaster areas by President Bill Clinton.

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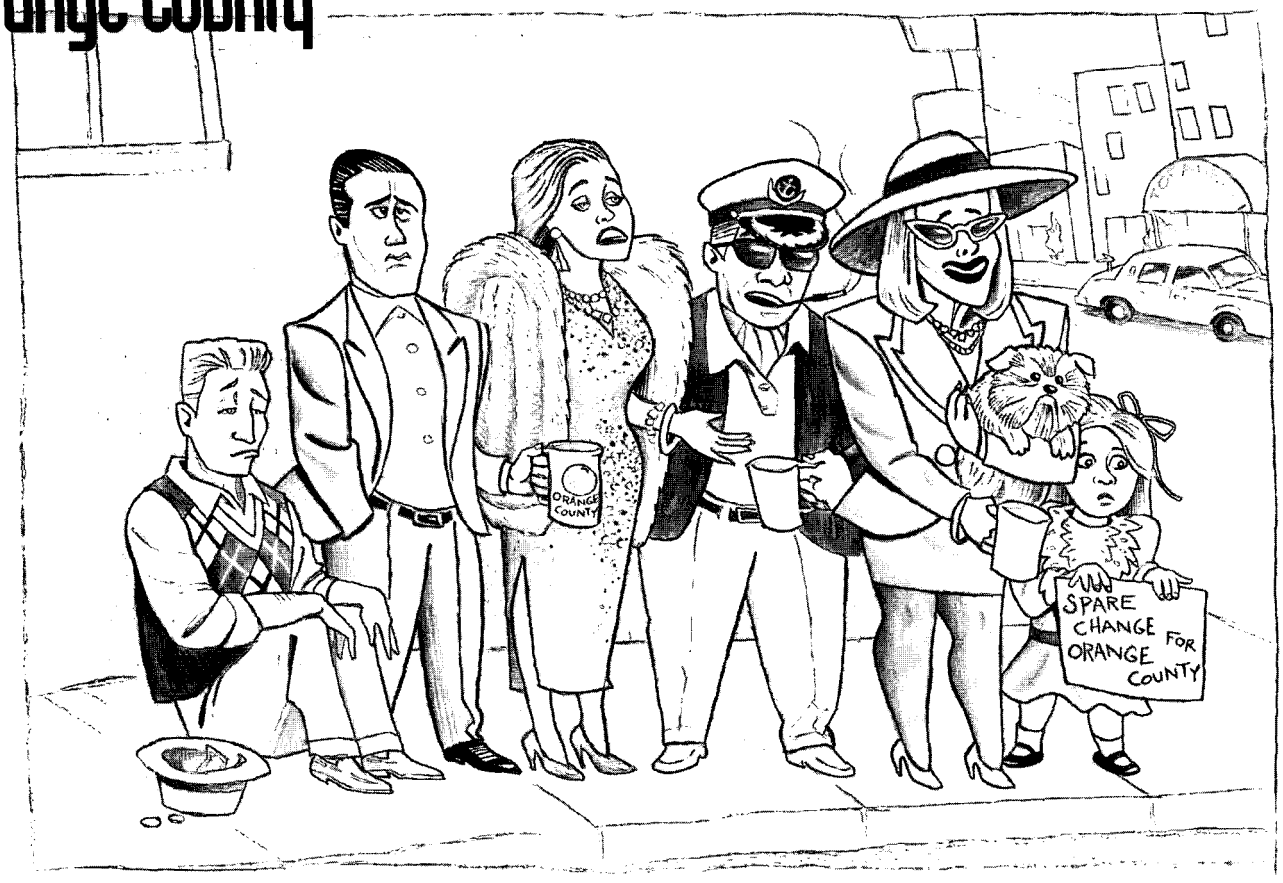

Illustration by Mike Tofanelli

Fiscal disaster savages once-wealthy county, but the wounds were self-inflicted

By Nancy H. Martis

Perhaps Roseann Rosannadanna said it best: "It just goes to show ya, it's always some thing." The character portrayed by the late comedienne Gilda Radner probably wasn't referring to the wide array of disasters that have been visited on California. And she certainly wasn't referring to the most recent financial catastrophe — the Orange County investment fiasco that has set national records as the largest county government disaster in history. But Orange County's travail brings Radner's catchphrase to mind.

The mid-1970s were no golden days in Orange County. Rocked by scandal, disgraced by indictments and paralyzed with fear, this bastion of conservatism faced a long, rough road to recovery following near-mortal wounding suffered in that decade. Twenty years ago, then-Orange County District Attorney Cecil Hicks spearheaded an investigation into corrupt development dealings that resulted in no less than 43 indictments, targeting congressmen, supervisors, special interest lobbyists and others. Hicks obtained at least 33 convictions, prompting political scientists to designate Orange County as "one of the most corrupt places in the country" and citizens' groups to launch political-reform efforts aimed at blocking any possible recurrence of the type of corruption the county was forced to survive.

What led to the county's troubles, *California Journal* reported in December 1977, "was that the county grew fast and furiously, more than doubling in population between 1960 and [1977], from 703,000 to 1.8 million... It has burgeoned into a scarcely distinguishable succession of sprawling tracts. And as the orange groves, bean fields and strawberry patches were

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replaced by streets and gutters, driveways and houses, political degeneration set in." That degeneration took the form of voter apathy — local city council election turnout averaged between 12 percent and 19 percent — and special-interest infiltration.

Although Orange County's current financial catastrophe is not the result of political corruption, some suggest that perhaps the county never fully convalesced following the charges and convictions that infested it in the mid-1970s. Earnest efforts were under way to prevent further political corruption, as in the "Time Is Now, Clean Up Politics" (TINCUP) drive, but the county's recovery addressed only its symptoms. In other words, it may be cleaner than the it was in the 1970s, but now it's broken.

The news of the once-wealthy county's financial demise came in two waves in December. First was the surprise resignation on Monday, December 5th, of Orange County Treasurer-Tax Collector Robert L. Citron, who had held the office for 24 years, managing the $18.5 billion investment fund. Citron's risky investment practices paid off big for years, earning average returns of 8 percent to 10 percent. But his strategy of using $12 billion in securities as collateral for short-term loans, an approach federal Securities Exchange Commission officials are calling improper, relied on interest rates remaining flat or dropping. Last year's sharp rise in interest rates, however, threw the fund off, and Citron disclosed that the investment pool lost $1.5 billion in 1994, bad news for the county and the 180 other public agencies with money nvested in the same pool. The losses now are estimated at $2.02 billion. The SEC had begun investigating the fund's portfolio just days before Citron resigned.

Then came the second shock wave. The Orange County Board of Supervisors spent all day Tuesday, December 6th, behind closed doors, juggling options to protect the county from sure disaster. At 5:01, in a rare move of last resort, the county filed for federal bankruptcy protection. Fearing a run on the fund, supervisors reportedly felt this was their only option given the seizure earlier in the day by CS First Boston Corporation of $2 billion of the county's securities used as collateral for its loans.

At the center of the controversy has been Citron's use of "derivatives," a term widely used since Orange County's troubles first surfaced. Citron entered into what are called "reverse repurchase agreements," or deals that use securities as collateral to borrow more money for investment in other securities. According to Sacramento City Treasurer Tom Friery, state law permits local governments to enter these agreements to supplement the interest income normally received from investment securities already owned. Friery, who does not participate in high-risk investment practices, explained, "These agreements result in short-term transactions of five-30 days where an owner of investment securities temporarily sells and agrees to buy back the securities in exchange for cash and an agreement to pay interest to the cash lender for the short time period. The original owner then takes the cash and buys another short-term investment

An interview with Tom Riley

The now-retired Orange County supervisor remains upbeat

By Jerry Jeffe

The immensely popular chairman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, Thomas F. Riley, was set to retire on December 31, 1994. At numerous banquets and award ceremonies, the 82-year-old, ex-Marine Corps brigadier general was lauded for his outstanding leadership, consistent fairness, honesty, integrity and openness to local residents.

Then disaster struck with a month remaining in his final term. Orange County went broke.

As chairman, Riley served as chief spokesman for Orange County during the first month of the financial crisis. Riley, who was first appointed to the board by then-Governor Ronald Reagan to fill an unexpired term in 1974, was ready for the challenge. After all, the 30-year veteran of the Marine Corps faced enemy gunfire in World War II. Now he had to speak on behalf of a county government under heavy siege by angry investors, local governments and county residents, among others.

Riley first learned about the financial crisis when county Administrative Officer Ernie Schneider met privately to inform each supervisor of the impending disaster. The veteran supervisor says he was stunned. "I had great difficulty understanding how it could happen," he said. "I certainly did not realize at the time the scope for what we were talking. I said this can't happen on my watch."

Jerry Jeffe is a newspaper columnist in Inglewood who writes on state and local government affairs.

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security to coincide with the agreement."

According to Friery, Citron apparently used $7 billion to buy investment securities, which he then used as collateral to borrow close to $7 billion in an arrangement where a rate of interest was fixed for 30 days. Citron, however, did not purchase short-term investment securities, but long-term securities that had fixed interest rates. In such a case, the investor stands to make a lot of money if interest rates go down; but he or she may lose if they go up. When interest rates rose, the value of the derivatized bonds plummetted, and the borrowing cost to Orange County soared. Citron allegedly did this three times and wound up with a $22 billion portfolio, more than $14 billion of it leveraged against the original $7 billion.

As investigators, legislators and political operatives sift through the tons of documents relative to Orange County's once-mighty investment portfolio, a theme similar to one that surfaced in the '70s is cropping up once again: The government structure in the third most-populous county in the state is flawed, that Orange County is a community without a nucleus, without a leader and therefore without a system of accountability; in other words, one that actually invites lax governance, particularly when it comes to elected officials supervising other elected officials. Governmental experts are beginning to develop proposals to address these flaws.

Questions over whether the county's structure invited financial problems have yet to be answered since the situation itself still is unfolding, although there is already much support for some form of restructuring. "Orange County is a rootless political system because they have no dominant city," said Tony Quinn, a political consultant and former member of the Fair Political Practices Commission. "Back [in the '70s], the system invited corruption. Orange County cleaned up its act; there are no more crooks. But the structural problems of accountability were never resolved. No one is in charge. It would be like California having a Legislature alone and no governor."

In Orange County, Supervisor Roger Stanton has released his proposal for a county restructuring, in which he called the creation of an appointed county executive officer (CEO) a viable option and made an obscure reference as to whether the treasurer should be an elected position, saying "the rationale of elected department heads must be examined." He also echoed the suggestion of newly elected Supervisor Marian Bergeson, a former state senator, that the county should seek "charter county" status instead of its current general-law status it the flexibility necessary to restructure and to contract with private companies for services that reduce the costs of government.

Quinn says it makes more sense for California to look to a Texas-like system, where a county elects one county judge — who serves much like a mayor — and four supervisors elected by district. He said under this scenario a treasurer would be more accountable, but adds that the treasurer shouldn't be an elected position at all because he or she has little or no accountability.

After the initial shock, Riley said that "things seemed to get worse, not better." Finally after a series of marathon meetings that left Riley and the other board members physically exhausted, Orange County filed for bankruptcy on December 6th.

Riley, of course, was concerned about the county's basic survival. Bondholders wanted their money back. Vital services such as police and fire could not be disrupted. Bills had to be paid. Just as important to Riley was the morale of the "county family, in Marine parlance — the troops." According to Riley, "I think that county staff were angry at what happened to them. But I think they feel that Orange County is a very special county ... and this thing is going to work out."

Asked to grade himself on how he responded during the crisis, Riley said he would "probably get pretty high marks." He tried to put a positive spin to everything he said to the "county family" and public. "I've tried to overemphasize that things are going to be well," he explained. "I'm trying to reflect in my leadership that we're going to work things out."

Riley also gave high marks to other members of the Board of Supervisors, outside legal and financial consultants, top county administrators, and especially to County Counsel Terry Andrus. "I'd give him a medal if it was in the war. He was able to keep this under control."

Until Orange County filed for bankruptcy, members of the Board of Supervisors of the third most-populated county in California, and an area well-known as a bastion of conservatism, never faced such intensive media scrutiny. As chairman, Riley felt an obligation to respond to this mostly negative attention. The Board of Supervisors, Riley felt, was made the scapegoat for the actions of the county treasurer, Robert Citron.

"It's a blame game," said Riley. "The county has a financial situation that is difficult, embarrassing, and it's attributed to an individual [Citron] whose record was hailed by many. And all of a sudden that failed." He said Citron was an independently elected official who appeared to have acted under the authority of state law.

Riley pointed out that Citron, a Democrat in one of the most Republican areas in the nation, was endorsed by all five members of the Board of Supervisors, Republicans all. Citron was easily re-elected in June 1994.

Ultimately, the Board of Supervisors must take responsibility, even though the criticism is undeserved, according to Riley. "I can understand this, being in the military, that's the boss [Board of Supervisors] up there. He has to be responsible. ...We must admit our share of the blame." Along those lines, Riley blames himself for failing to recognize serious problems with Citron's investment practices when they were brought to his attention during the last couple of years.

The county's financial and legal advisers have been hesitant to predict when the financial crisis will eventually work itself out. Riley, too, was unsure. "It's going to be out there for awhile." The fourth longest tenured supervisor in the history of Orange County was especially concerned because he had almost a hundred thousand dollars in deferred compensation frozen in the bankrupt fund. He was planning to use that money to pay off his mortgage and buy a new car.

Riley is upbeat about the county's future, however. "Please don't feel that I condone what happened. I'm saddened by that. I still believe that this county is strong. I believe that the future development is almost still guaranteed. Big businesses are still going to come here. We have a lot to offer."

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Barbara Coates, president of the California Association of County Treasurers and Tax Collectors, disagrees, saying because a treasurer is elected countywide, it is that large constituency to whom they are accountable. "Being elected, treasurers have the ability to manage the pool without interference of the board," said Coates, the elected treasurer of Plumas County. "Because of the failure of one county does not mean across the board that treasurers are not doing their jobs or that constituents aren't doing their job to keep qualified people in office. You have to logically evaluate how the county treasurers have been doing their jobs for many, many years."

Coates' group, along with the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), has developed a bill to be introduced in the Legislature that would require candidates for treasurer to meet a minimum level of qualification for the job, institute continuing education standards and establish an oversight committee to review the treasurer's investment activities.

And what is the role of state government in this mess?

Governor Pete Wilson asked a former state treasurer, Tom Hayes, to review the county's portfolio and report on the fund's condition and losses. It was Hayes who determined the fund losses to be $2.02 billion, and a U.S. bankruptcy court ruled that the county could begin selling the securities to prevent further losses should interest rates increase. According to H.D. Palmer with the Department of Finance, the next step is to apportion those losses among the different investors, which include school districts and special districts. He said Wilson has dispatched State Auditor Kurt Sjoberg to handle just that, and he has directed state Treasurer Matt Fong to chair a task force to determine appropriate legislative remedies that could be pursued to assure such financial calamities do not occur again.

But short of providing resources and tools to assess the crisis, Palmer said that the state has no direct responsibility to bail out Orange County. "As far as a blanket policy dealing with counties in financial distress, there isn't one," he said. "In terms of the investments that were made, there is no excuse for making investments that put county funds at such a high level of risk. It is a wrong presumption for local government entities to go eyes open into highly speculative investments and expect the state to be their deep pockets."

Since passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, California's 58 counties have bemoaned their financial plight and watched their budgets get slashed. They have very little discretion over spending, given that up to 90 percent of county budgets are already spoken for in terms of state and federally mandated programs. Some say the situation in Orange County is a warning shot across the bow for other counties and municipalities that might have begun toying with fast and loose financing strategies to balance the books.

"The Orange County financial earthquake is certainly more than just a warning to other counties to be circumspect about how they do business," said Assemblywoman Marilyn Brewer, a Republican from Orange County and former aide to retired Orange County Supervisor Thomas Riley (see page 18). "The federal government mandates without providing funds, the state government mandates without funds, and this places

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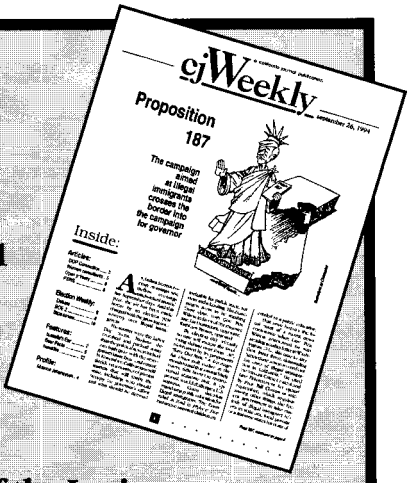

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burdens beyond the capability of counties. We're in an era where government needs to re-examine how it's doing business."

But one source harkens to the 1970s, when local governments had to learn to live with Proposition 13, while Orange County, apparently, refused. "When Prop. 13 hit, the Board [of Supervisors in Orange County] was unwilling to make sacrifices and wanted to maintain a high level of services," said an Orange County politico who asked not to be identified. "Citron was proposing legislation for more flexibility to invest money, the federal government deregulated, he made money and they [board members] looked the other way."

That again raises the question of accountability. In the 1970s, all but one Orange County supervisor, Riley, were indicted after apparently feeling more accountable to campaign-contributing developers than an apathetic voting population. In the years following, there grew a reluctance if not a refusal on the part of elected officeholders to assume oversight of other elected officeholders. Indeed, evidence that the financial underpinnings of Orange County's investment portfolio were unstable was in the hands of the Board of Supervisors a full year before the last-resort bankruptcy filing last month. But the only input required was that of Citron, and no further questions were asked.

Riley has said the report from a 1991 county audit of the treasurer's office was presented to him as chairman of the board. He recalls having given the report to his key staffer, now freshman Assemblywoman Brewer, for review, and she identified several concerns over some of the auditor's findings. Citron responded in writing to the audit and addressed the concerns brought up by Riley and Brewer. Riley said Brewer read the response and wrote back that everything seemed to be fine. In 1993 the audit and response became public.

For her part, Brewer was unwilling to comment on the report — and her role in approving it. But she was willing to discuss the wisdom of whether or not a treasurer should be elected. She called the notion of an appointed rather than elected treasurer "viable and forward thinking. From my experience within the county structure, if the county treasurer had been appointed rather than elected, there would have been more accountability to the Board of Supervisors. But if they're elected, there is more of a hands-off mentality."

Those in the middle of the fact-finding missions and the immediate survival efforts are too busy to look beyond the tasks at hand. Dennis Carpenter, a former state senator and now a lobbyist representing Orange County, says proposals for a county government restructuring and those that place restrictions on treasurers' investment practices are important but premature. "We are not addressing the issues of the treasurer at this time," Carpenter said. "We're talking about the fiscal impacts and ways to lessen that to meet immediate needs. We've got to clear the decks for life-saving bills."

And indeed, despite quests to lay blame or develop preventive measures into the next century, Orange County and the rest of the state have yet to feel the impact of the county's demise, let alone analyze the extent of the damage. Until then, Californians have another lesson from Orange County.

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The Quest for Community

Editor's note: Each month during this, our 25th Anniversary year, California Journal *will devote a portion of the magazine to an issue likely to impact heavily upon this state over the next quarter-century. Each story or essay relating to the central theme is marked with our anniversary logo. This month, we explore the issue of "community vs. diversity," with the lead essay by Jack Citrin, a professor of political science at UC-Berkeley.*

By Jack Citrin

> Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio.
> The nation turns its lonely eyes to you.
> — Paul Simon

As the 20th Century lurches to a close, California, once proclaimed as a "Great Exception" immune to the problems of growth, confronts cultural fragmentation, economic uncertainty and political deadlock. No wonder nostalgia reigns, and so many observers contrast a gilded "then" with a tarnished "now." When California truly glittered between 1948 and 1968, they say, people flocked to the state from the rest of the country. Now, some of the same people are leaving. Then, mass migration from the hinterland sustained belief in a common culture based on a comfortable lifestyle; now, immigration heightens ethnic antagonisms. Then, California built schools, universities, highways and water projects; now, it builds prisons and shopping malls. Then, a professional Legislature and competent civil service planned for the future; now, a divided government lacking public trust shrinks from change.

While both the shining "then" and the dark "now" are exaggerated, the slide to the present reality does reflect significant structural changes with enduring implications. The wave of immigration from Latin America and Asia has transformed the state's ethnic profile. Electoral decisions have restricted the power of elected officials to deal with demands emanating from demographic change. The collapse of communism has resulted in a loss of high-paying jobs in defense and related industries, and a concomitant reduction in the government's fiscal resources.

Clearly, national decisions, such as immigration and welfare reform, and international forces, such as the changing value of the peso, will affect the future shape of California's society and constrain its political choices. Nevertheless, the state's own policies in three important domains also will influence how it defines itself as a political community.

On the cultural front, the underlying clash is between the politics of difference and the politics of assimilation. On the budgetary front, the conflict is over how much government should spend, on what and for whom. On the decision-making front, the debate is between restoring the power of representative institutions and further enhancing the processes of direct democracy. Each choice expresses a public philosophy, a distinctive conception of the common good. And each choice tends to favor the interests and values of some ethnic and economic groups at the expense of others. Affirmative-action and bilingual-education programs favor ethnic minorities. Government spending for welfare and public health services help the poor. The majoritarian bias of initiatives and referendums gives an electoral advantage to the preferences of non-Hispanic white voters, who in California are a larger share of the electorate than of the population at large.

Proposition 187 symbolized one combination of choices: more cultural homogeneity, less government spending and more direct democracy. But as the heated debate over illegal immigration showed, the search for common ground in a multi-ethnic society is an exacting task.

Of all issues facing California, coping with ethnic diversity is the most consequential. The 1990 Census reported that the proportion of Hispanic and Asian residents in the state had grown from 25.9 percent to 35.7 percent in a decade, and it is projected that, due to continued immigration and

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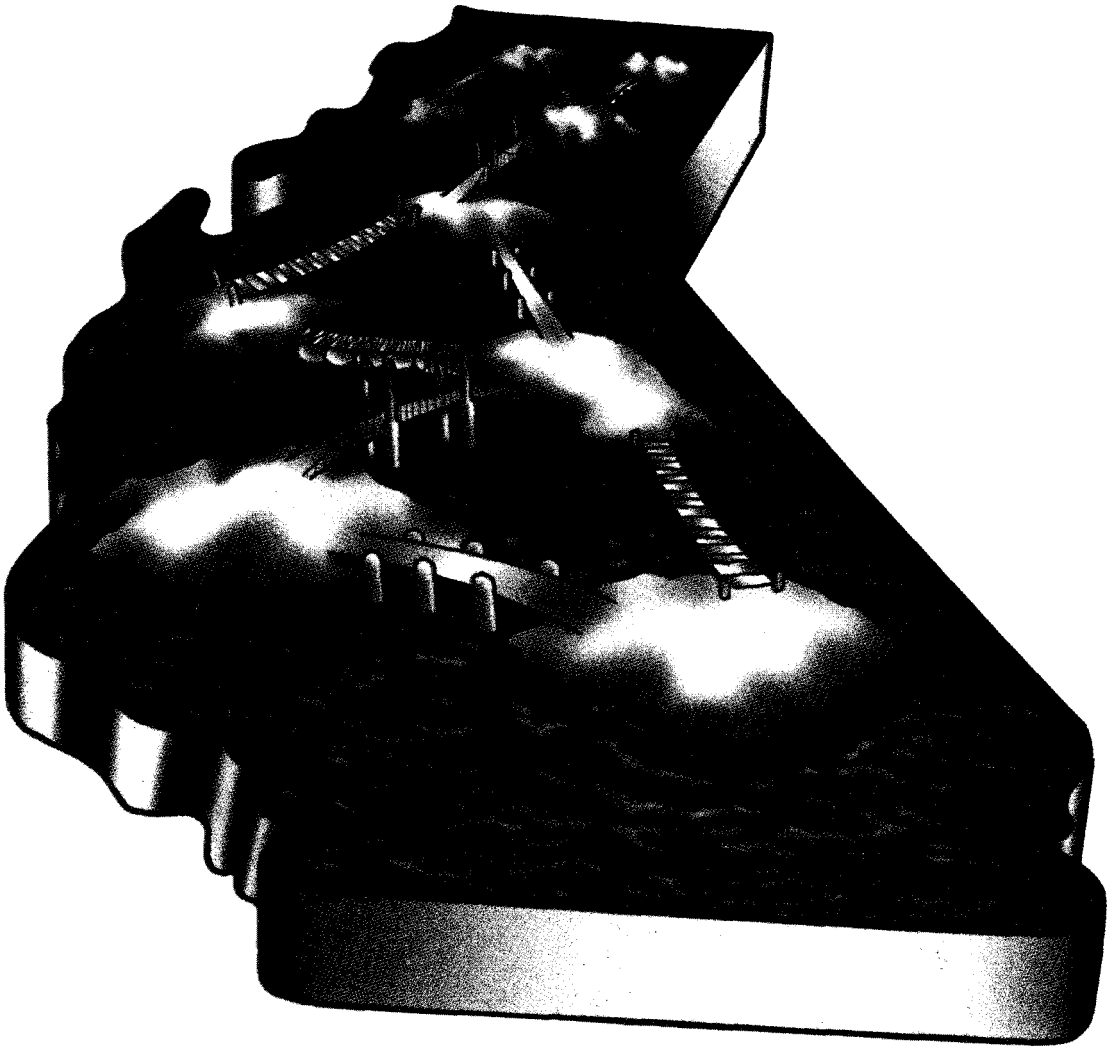

Computer illustration by Perry Babasin

differences in birth rates, by the year 2000, only 50.6 percent of California's population will be non-Hispanic whites. The national trend is similar, though less accentuated. The interplay of this demographic trend with the revival of racial and ethnic consciousness poses a political challenge that may strain the capacities of democratic institutions.

The traditional American solution to the problem of ethnic diversity is what may be termed "liberal nationalism." This doctrine defines American identity in ideological rather than ethnic terms. Whatever one's ancestry or background, to be an American, one has only to adhere to a set of ideals: liberty, individualism and popular sovereignty.

In principle, though often not in practice, liberal nationalism is ethnically inclusive. It asserts that anyone can belong and move up the social ladder provided he or she assimilates. The melting pot blends a variety of cultural streams to produce an enriched popular culture without eroding the distinctive ideological core of American identity. Still, immigrants do give up something to achieve acceptance and mobility; their "brutal" bargain means the gradual loss of their original language and customs.

In the vocabulary of contemporary politics, liberal nationalism stands for individual rights, equality of opportunity and the maintenance of minority cultures through the effort of private institutions. It holds that political incorporation for racial minorities and immigrants should occur through citizenship, voting, ticket-balancing and building coalitions within the existing party system.

"Multicultural nationalism" has emerged as a fundamentally different solution to the problem of diversity. The rise of multiculturalism in American politics was sparked by the Civil Rights movement and sustained by the new wave of immigration. In an important sense, it is a response to the persistence of racial inequalities despite legal change.

In contrast to liberal nationalism, multiculturalism construes one's racial or ethnic identity as primary. It upholds the viability and merit of several, equally worthy cultures within the United States. Generally unconcerned about the need for a unifying ideological cement beyond mutual tolerance, advocates of multiculturalism criticize the forces of assimilation that melt down one's ethnic heritage.

By insisting that membership in a particular racial or ethnic group is the ultimate source of one's identity and interests, multiculturalism stands for group rights, equality of outcomes and official recognition for minority languages and cultures. In the political realm, the guiding principle of multiculturalism is communal representation based on numerical strength. In other words, ethnicity should govern the allocation of important benefits such as jobs, government contracts, places in universities, control of the curriculum in schools, legislative seats, time on public television, space in museums, and so forth.

In this context, the census count becomes a paramount political issue. Given the incentive to be designated as part of a group deserving protection from "under-representation," ethnicity can become a strategic option as much as a

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primordial identity. A recent example is the successful effort of South Asians in San Francisco to gain access to minority set-asides by exiting the Caucasian census category.

A politics of difference must decide how many and which groups deserve recognition and special treatment. The official tendency today is to divide American society into Native-American, European, African-American, Hispanic, and Asian blocs that are assumed to be internally homogeneous. This approach lumps together people, as say Chinese and Filipino residents, with distinctive interests and outlooks, so it may promote demands for a more fine-grained taxonomy of distinct "cultures" and the extension of preferences to these sub-groups. Whatever the system of classification one adopts, whether it creates rather than reflects ethnic divisions, is an important and controversial issue.

The contested meaning of American identity has relevance for current policy choices. For example, because government officials are needed to administer, monitor and enforce the supply of group entitlement, a commitment to affirmative action implies the augmentation of state power. Similarly, a belief in the rights of groups may dictate redirecting public spending to equalize their status.

Immigration is another case in point. Immigration is a highly emotional issue because it defines who belongs to the political community and on what terms. A recent article by Nathan Glazer in *The Public Interest* suggests that one reason for the rise of restrictionist sentiment today is fear that multicultural initiatives in education and language policy will slow assimilation and sow ethnic discord.

Supreme Court decisions in recent years extended many social and political rights to immigrants, thereby reducing the special benefits of citizenship. Non-white immigrants, the current majority, are eligible for affirmative-action benefits denied to either native-born or naturalized whites. Resentment of these developments helped fuel Proposition 187, much as the earlier passage of an "official English" law revealed the staying power of the assimilationist ethos.

The national spread of race-conscious policies resulted from the actions or decisions by judges, bureaucrats and

Diversity in South Central

African-Americans and Korean-Americans work to reduce community tensions

By Jerry Jeffe

They are Korean-Americans, and their numbers are large, and their success rate in business enviable. Much of that success, however, has come in neighborhoods dominated by other ethnic and racial groups — and over the years this has sparked a simmering tension that finally exploded into violence during the Los Angeles riots of 1992.

The estimated 350,000 people of Korean ancestry living in Southern California marks the largest group of Koreans living outside Asia, and they have established a significant presence, particularly in small, service-oriented retail businesses. "This is where most Americans encounter Koreans," said Craig Coleman, executive director of The Korea Society/ Los Angeles, who has worked with the Korean-American community for over 20 years.

Many of the encounters take place in liquor stores and "mom and pop" convenience stores in predominately African-American/Latino South Central Los Angeles and the Koreatown section of Los Angeles, where a significant number of Korean-Americans own businesses, but do not live. According to Eric Chang, deputy director of the Korea American Coalition, Korean-Americans tend to live in the suburbs rather than inner city neighborhoods. In fact, he said, "only 20 percent of the residents in Koreatown are Korean-Americans."

"The Koreans came into the community with the work ethic — very strong — and the commitment to their own families. So everyone hired is Korean," said Senator Diane Watson (D-Los Angeles), an African-American who has many Korean-American constituents.

Tensions between the African-American and Korean-American communities have increased in recent years, and Watson believes three factors are responsible for it: The Koreans' failure to hire local residents of another color; the fact that many Korean-Americans are not fluent in English; and African-Americans mistaking the Koreans' formal mannerisms as rude and aloof behavior.

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Democratic legislatures insulated from the pressures of mass opinion. The outcome of the 1994 elections, however, indicates that what ordinary people think may matter. This is especially true in California, where the initiative process gives citizens the ability to decide specific policies and where ethnic differences in citizenship, registration and turnout boost the strength of white voters.

In activist circles, "identity politics" — the tendency to judge political actions and policies in terms of their impact on the standing of one's own ethnic group — is widespread. The evidence of the polls, however, reveals little support for the multicultural conception of political identity and derivative policies. Ethnic differences in outlook do exist, but these are neither very large nor consistent. Apparently, ordinary citizens continue to believe in the national talent for assimilating diverse peoples.

These conclusions emerge from a Los Angeles County survey conducted in mid-1994. The study is of a restricted sample, of course, but its results are consistent with national and statewide data showing pervasive support for liberal nationalism. A large majority of every ethnic group in the Los Angeles sample said they considered themselves "just an American" rather than a member of a specific ethnic group when deciding political issues. And while a majority agreed that "Americans are greatly divided when it comes to the most important values," this does not imply a belief that ethnicity should define one's identity. When asked whether racial and ethnic groups should "change so they blend into the larger society" or "maintain their own cultures," respondents opted for the melting pot by a margin of 55 to 27 percent.

Linguistic assimilation also was strongly favored. As a group, only Hispanics opposed to a law designating English as the official language of the United States. A majority in all ethnic groups, however, supported policies designed to facilitate the political integration of linguistic minorities: 58 percent of the Los Angeles sample approved of transitional bilingual education programs, and 65 percent agreed that ballots should be printed in languages other than English to help people vote.

"Koreans have a lack of experience dealing with diversity," said Angela Eunjin Oh, an attorney and former special counsel to the Assembly Special Committee on the L.A. Crisis. She added that there is a "level of arrogance in the Korean community" since they do not identify with other immigrant groups.

For their part, Korean-Americans have had a "certain feeling of unwelcome, left out, anxieties to a new country ... hostility that they are not welcome," said Howard Kwon, a member of the ABC Unified School District Board of Education of suburban Los Angeles, who articulated a problem that all immigrant groups must overcome when trying to survive in a multicultural society.

The root of the problems between Blacks and Koreans may be traced back to the Watts riots of 1965. At the time, the merchants who owned small "mom and pop" retail and liquor stores in South Central were primarily Jewish. After 1965, the Jewish merchants sold their businesses to Blacks, who came under increasing fire from community activists in the early 1980s over the contention that their liquor stores contributed to crime and public nuisance problems in South Central. Thus, Blacks got out of the business, selling their establishments to Koreans.

According to Karen Bass, executive director of the Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, "Unfortunately, the Koreans walked into what's already a hostile environment," and had no idea that many Blacks were targeting liquor stores for closure.

Today, the coalition of over 500 organizations and individuals Bass leads actively targets problem liquor stores and strongly denies that the ethnicity of the merchants is a factor. "The community response to a store is based on problems specific to a particular location and is never racially motivated."

Tensions between the Korean and Black communities grew after 15-year-old African-American Latasha Harlins was shot to death by merchant Soon Ja Du during an alleged shoplifting attempt in 1991. The two communities were further torn apart when Soon Ja Du was sentenced to probation and a $500 fine — a penalty many Blacks felt was not justice.

Relations between the two communities sank to perhaps their lowest point during the 1992 riots. Estimates vary as to how many businesses were destroyed or damaged by different groups, but the Korean American Grocers Victims Association claims at least 2000 were owned by Koreans. Damage was concentrated in South Central and Koreatown.

According to a report issued by former Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley's office, a large number of stores going up in flames were liquor stores subject to complaints from residents or had a pattern of unhappy encounters between Korean-American employees and African-American customers. The report implies that a significant amount of the destruction "represents the bottled-up sentiment" of residents who sought some modicum of revenge against Korean — and other ethnic — merchants.

There has been a change in relations particularly following the '92 riots. Some of it started before the riots through the efforts of the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission and other organizations that were attempting to bring some conflict resolution techniques to the community. Since '92, however, a broad coalition of organizations, elected officials, community and business leaders, and concerned individuals have come together to address the conflicts between two diverse communities. For instance, the Korean Youth and Community Center (KYCC) and the Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment work together to convert liquor stores to other types of businesses in South Central. They also jointly sponsor a graffiti-removal project operated by teenagers of both communities.

The cities of Los Angeles and Inglewood, which has an estimated 350 Korean-American business but almost no Korean residents, sponsor workshops and training sessions for Koreans to learn about American customs and business practices. KYCC sponsors similar programs.

These efforts are paying off. "Korean-American merchants are much more courteous and polite to African-Americans than ever before. We don't have the incidents or the hostility that once was there and was so very apparent," said Thomasina Reed, an African-American member of the Inglewood School District Board of Education.

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Affirmative action has long been a major political battleground. National polls have repeatedly shown support for the abstract principle of racial equality combined with intense opposition to anything that smacks of quotas. The Los Angeles survey similarly found that large majorities of all four ethnic groups disapproved of the idea that "because of past discrimination, minorities should be given preference in hiring and promotion." It did not matter whether the group to benefit was Black, Hispanic or Asian.

Tying political representation to ethnicity also is unpopular, despite the thrust of the Voting Rights Act. A substantial minority of every ethnic group agrees that people are best represented in politics by someone with the same background, but almost no one (13 percent) wants to require that Congress mirror the population at large. Only 8 percent of respondents believed that the racial background of public school and university teachers should closely match the distribution among their students. In allocating desirable social roles, then, ordinary citizens prefer "ability" over "ethnicity."

Despite substantial elitist rhetoric, particularly in universities, and official policies that promote multiculturalism, most ordinary citizens appear unpersuaded. The public remains optimistic about achieving a community in which people share common ideals, speak the same language and advance as a result of individual effort rather than group entitlement. Even among the Hispanic respondents, who display relatively more support for the multicultural policy agenda, there is limited sympathy for maintaining a separate cultural identity on a long-term basis.

Moreover, on both immigration and language issues, including Proposition 187, a variety of polls indicate that the immigrant generation and citizenship status of Asian and Hispanic respondents influence their opinions. As in the past, it seems, integration into American life erodes ethnic differences in political outlooks.

The gulf between elite actions and mass attitudes creates a dynamic situation with a number of potential outcomes. If the politically active stratum were united, one possible trend might be a shift toward more acceptance of institutionalized multiculturalism. The recent Republican ascendancy, however, has strengthened critics of ethnic preferences. An electoral campaign framed in these terms seems bound to increase ethnic polarization at the mass level.

In a society whose population constantly replenishes itself with immigrants from diverse cultures, the inculcation of a unifying identity is a permanent problem. At present, the only solution with broad popular support is a revitalized version of a universalistic and inclusive melting pot. In many respects, America is a more tolerant society than in the past, and agreement on liberal nationalism coexists with respect for cultural pluralism in the private realm.

The alternative conception of the United States as just a container for distinct groups is fueled by the tenacity of ethnically based inequalities. If ethnicity determines the boundaries of a common interest, however, the validation of separateness is unlikely to foster support for equality. Why, one might ask, should I pay for taxes to support someone who claims to be essentially different?

Ethnic cleavages in California overlap with other lines of division: between suburban and urban residents; between economic classes, between "taxpayers" and "tax receivers." In each instance, Blacks tend to be found on the more vulnerable side of the fault line. Race, not immigration or cultural diversity, remains the most intractable political problem.

Over time, citizenship and voting inevitably will speed the empowerment of the rapidly growing Hispanic and Asian communities. There are important differences of values and interests within each of these groups, as well as conflicts between the three main minorities. The pattern of ethnic coalitions thus is likely to vary from issue to issue.

Along with the increasing use of the initiative process in state politics, term limits are likely to weaken the power of incumbent representatives, and the Legislature as an institution *vis-a-vis* the governor. This development may also diminish the power of the residentially concentrated but less-participant minority groups in the near future. In the present institutional context, programs aimed at benefitting minorities will win support only when these policies are framed in ways that affirm rather than attack the dominant conception of American identity.

Harmony in diversity requires some consensus on values. It also requires general confidence in progress toward a better life and in equal treatment. Economic growth remains a solvent for many discontents. To a surprising degree, liberal nationalism remains a powerful ideological glue for most Californians of all ethnicities. The culture wars of the elites are a sideshow in the battles of ordinary life. The task for leadership is to advance the quest for community by moving from symbolism to pragmatism.

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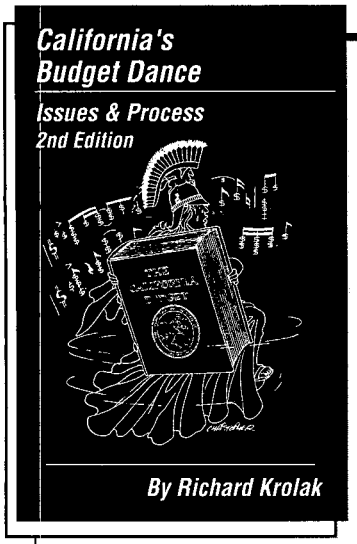

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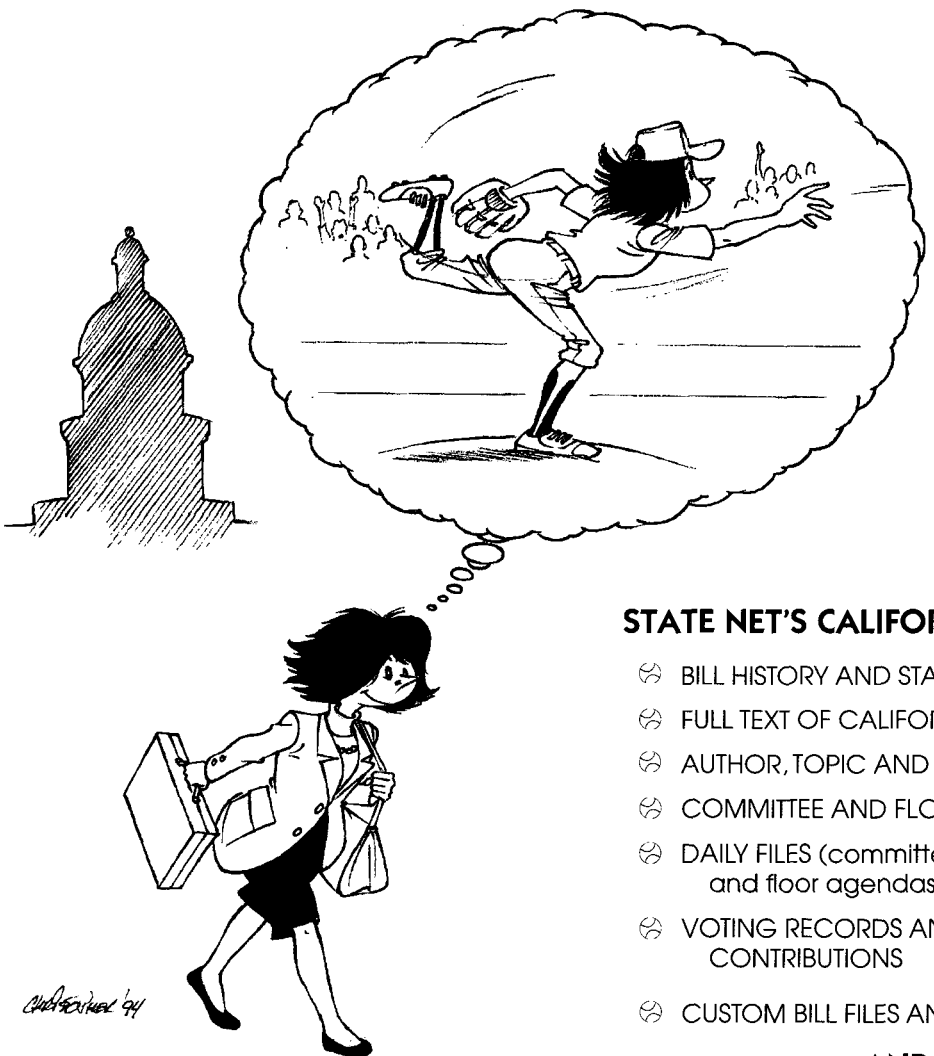

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A Time for

By Jeff Lustig

The dream of gold, the sunshine dream, the homesteader's and homeowner's dreams, the dream of a second chance, and now the diversity dream are only a few of the apparitions that direct Californians' days and disturb their nights. Utopian visions, therapeutic promises, futurist fantasies and political panaceas have been here from the start, provoking the recent warning that "if its eyeballs are glazed, it comes from California" and proposals to post psychiatrists — not INS agents — at the borders.

This dreaming is usually treated as a harmless habit, a charming regional pastime. But it may not be that simple or innocuous. The complaint is not that dreams keep us from seeing realities. Realists dream, too — sometimes dangerously, as shown by the old hydraulickers or new ag-scientists who replace soil pests with poisons. The point is rather that because of historical peculiarities and a resulting "thinness" of institutions, Californians' dreams tell with particular force. The line between imagination and reality is hard to find; sometimes, as in Hollywood, it isn't there at all.

The important questions, then, have to do with the content of our dreams. California was known by myths and fables even before it was settled, and the terms of those fables still shape our goals and limit our sense of possibility. Far from simply limning rosy possibilities, these dreams authorize much of the reckless and depredatory activity that has distinguished California life from the beginning. Four dreams in particular define what is has meant to be a Californian.

- The most influential California dream has been of "opportunity," an idea that has changed its meaning from early gold-seekers to later homesteaders to recent Guatemalan refugees working in L.A. sweatshops. The original promise was of land and the ownership of producer property. Henry George, the unrivaled theorist of this promise, saw it as conferring security, the chance to get ahead, to express "the god-like powers of creativity" and — a now-submerged part of the American Dream — to disperse social power. By the 1870s, a third of the state's hundred-million acres had been disposed of, however, and with it most of this opportunity.
- The second dream, revealed in this idea of land, has been of nature as a realm of boundless generosity. Geology conspired with social history to produce the Gold Rush as the state's founding event. The event bequeathed to future Californians not only a fateful idea of success, but a view of the state's occupations as exercises in extraction: farming, lumbering, now perhaps even political campaigning. A miner's freedom consists in taking, and then leaving — tailings, abandoned shafts, even cyanide leachings. For him, nature is a Mother who not only provides, but who is expected to pick up after you.

Though this nature was sometimes called a "commons," commonses are maintained by social institutions and complex patterns of care. The early California dream was rather of nature as a vast waste, free for the taking. As public domain, it was no one's domain. Assumptions about its boundless wealth freed people, however, from the obligation of learning its rhythms and limits. That California could be a harsh and punishing place was missed. Each earthquake, fire, flood and drought still catches Californians by surprise and leaves them nervous, if not feeling cheated.

California does possess an honorable tradition of protecting natural resources, beginning with the prohibition of hydraulicking itself in 1884. But these efforts have been episodic. And they now fall victim to a century-old legal doctrine that portrays the public's stake as a "taking."

- Implicit in these dreams is a third — of freedom as a natural fact. It is seen as provided by the region's very air and space. Freedom is not seen as a social or political achievement, or as something requiring a "long apprenticeship," as de Tocqueville saw given by the participatory politics of New England townships. California's distant cabins and Sierra towns is not that kind of community but rather detached bits of society — a fact not appreciated. That one cannot be free without social endowments, cannot be free alone, is not acknowledged by dreamers of this dream. "Whoever sought a fool's liberty here," Josiah Royce countered prophetically in 1886, "soon found a man's bondage. The snares of the gods were well-laid." He would not be surprised that those who disdained social institutions wind up embracing the most repressive of them, the prison system.
- The Californian dreams himself, fourthly, as a liberator, a conferrer of liberty. What were they there for? William Ide demanded the morning of the Bear Flag Rebellion in 1846. "Was it not for some truly worthy object — namely independence? Nay," said he, "we are robbers or we must be conquerors." A candid point, and an obvious choice. Casting oneself as hero, however, means casting everyone else as tyrant or ineffectual victim (and further, as enemy if he refuses the gift). Indeed, this self requires these "others" to exist, and

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Jeff Lustig is a professor of government at California State University, Sacramento, and chairman of the California Studies Association.

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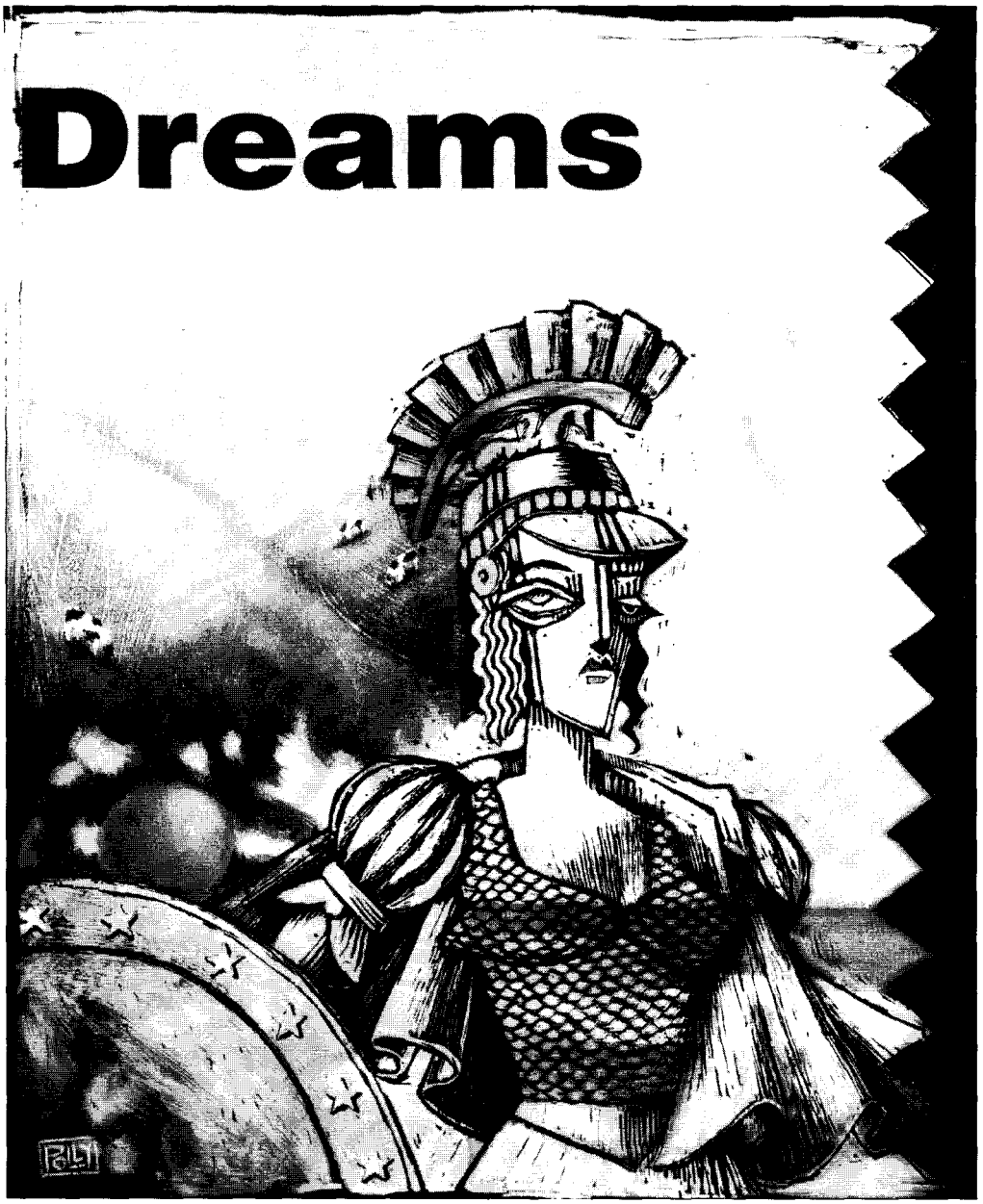
New Dreams



Journal *cover, August 1992 by Polly Powell*

creates them when they are absent. California history is replete with such designated "others," from Chinese to Japanese, Reds and now undocumented immigrants. These people see the legacy of conquest differently in their dreams.

Other communitarian, pluralist, cooperative and egalitarian dreams have gone into the making of California. California's "burden of violence and frustration" has also bred a counter-fable, as State Librarian Kevin Starr observed.

But the above-noted dreams are the main ones. Working together they not only justify spoilation and expansion, they prevent Californians from understanding their natural and social worlds. They also obscure history, making California leaders feel compelled, for example, to deny the government's critical role in enabling past prosperity and freedom by enabling railroad expansion, building infrastructure during Progressivism, subsidizing agribusiness with water, providing defense contracts, and now supporting biotechnology.

What happens when you wake a dreamer too fast? Belligerent complaints, for one thing. Attempts to impose dreams on reality, for another.

But let us not call for an end to dreaming. "Without vision the people perish." Let us ask instead for better dreams. Perhaps a dream of providing our own foundations for economic opportunity rather than blaming others for their lack? Or a dream of new political arrangements beyond the ones handed down from the 17th Century that are now hamstrung and that invite a caste society rather than a multicultural democracy? How about dreaming up a way to "secure in a more complex state of society the same equality of rights," status and power provided by property in a simpler state, as George suggested a century ago?

This would mean not only new dreams but dreams of a different sort. The above-noted dreams are distinguishable by their one-dimensionality. Royce admitted the tragic possibility, but he was alone. More generally, as Starr observes, "California concealed its sins and all but banished the tragic sense. Crimes were ... sentimentalized and forgotten in the sunshine." Our present crises provide the opportunity to revoke this ban and gain a fuller understanding of ourselves. It is doubtful we can do what we need to socially, environmentally or economically without a more complex sense of where are, who we are, and how we got here.

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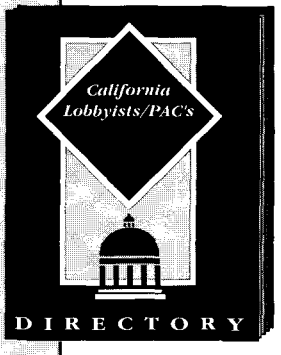

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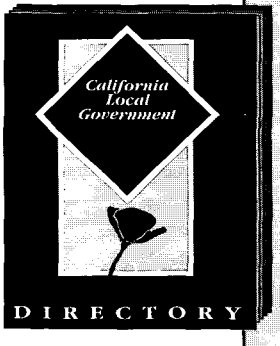

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Diversity in higher education

Minority youth have made great strides over the past decade

By Mary Ellen Leary

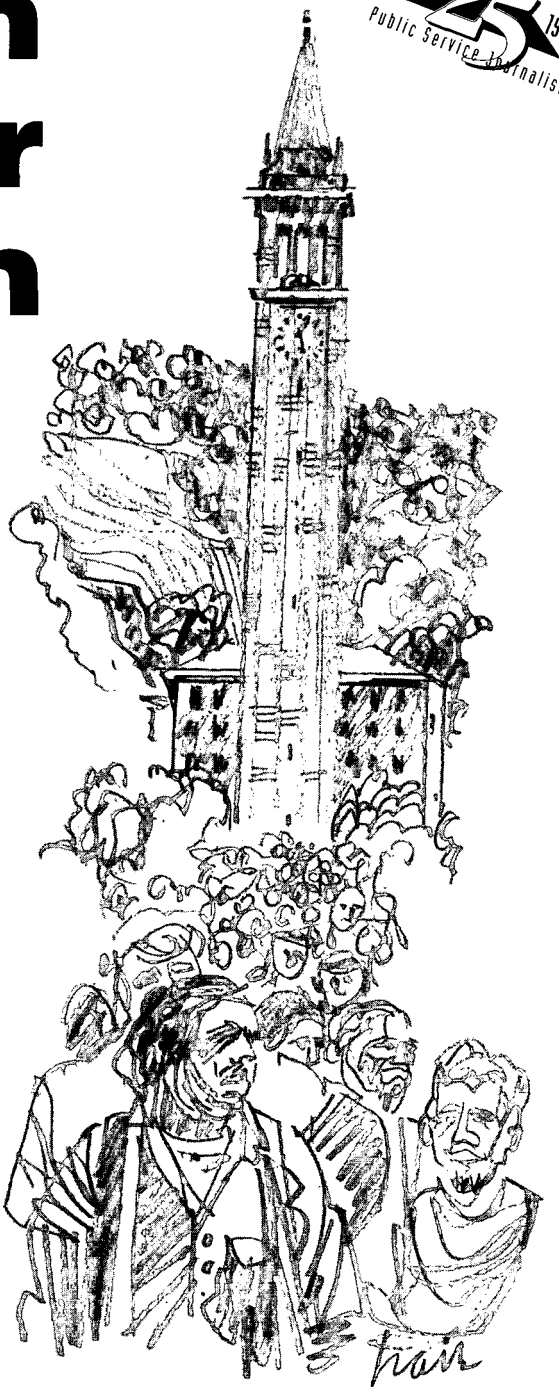

Illustration by Tom Hair

A remarkable chapter in American education, a record of astonishing success, is unfolding in California with little recognition. It is the drawing of so large a number of minority students from impoverished and disadvantaged backgrounds through elementary and high school towards entry into California's three-level system of higher education. But even as this success is recognized, the sheer number of students entering state schools threatens to overwhelm the measures that created it.

Considering the ethnic diversity of the population flooding the state's school system, the high ratio living in poverty — 52 percent of the Hispanic children according to the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) — and the large numbers

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Mary Ellen Leary is a veteran political writer who has covered California matters for more than 40 years. She has been a correspondent with The Economist *since 1967.*

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involved, the preparation of so many for college-level academia is unparalleled elsewhere. Consider also that a quarter-million of the children in high school are classified as "limited English proficient," needing language training to comprehend their textbooks. One measure of this success is the increase of Hispanics in higher education. In the past decade their numbers among entering freshmen have grown by 70 percent in California community colleges; by 94 percent at the various campuses of the California State University system and by 67 percent at the University of California, as tallied by the commission.

The truly astonishing change over the past decade has been the meteoric rise of Asians

Behind this improvement, spurring it, are a multitude of programs through elementary and high schools: special tutoring, one-on-one encouragement, outreach to parents, peer encouragement. Some are the product of an enterprising individual teacher, some a school district innovation, some the purposeful recruitment developed by a college or university. Even private colleges in the state have built outreach links to local elementary schools and high schools. Stanford's Graduate School of Business, for instance, early on sent volunteer tutors to local grade schools in impoverished neighborhoods.

It may even be counted a measure of success that the high school drop-out rate in California, which used to record about a third of all Hispanic or African-Americans students quitting high school before graduation, now is down to about 20 percent. In terms of sheer numbers, Hispanics who stayed in high school to graduate rose from 38,600 in 1982 to 71,464 in 1993.

Measuring the pursuit of higher education by Hispanic achievement is important because this segment of the population is the fastest-growing and is expected to become a majority of the state's population (see page 22). In pondering the dry statistics of school population, one gets a sharp, even a shocking, realization of the astounding changes occurring in the state's demography — and indirectly its culture. For instance, in 1980 white children numbered over two million, or 53 percent of the state's high school population. Presently they are 42 percent and expected to drop to 30 percent in another decade. Hispanics, on the other hand, will see their portion of the high school population grow from 37 percent to 49 percent over the same decade.

African-Americans and Native-Americans have not been as successful as Hispanics in aspiring to higher education. African-American numbers have declined at community colleges and at UC in the past decade, although they have increased by about 5 percent at CSU campuses. African-Americans last year were about 20 percent of those entering CSU. Today they represent 4 percent of total UC undergraduates. According to the CPEC, one defining drawback African-Americans face is poverty; some 31 percent are from households with incomes below the poverty level. Although Hispanic children also confront poverty, they appear to get more family encouragement in education.

The truly astonishing change over the past decade has been the meteoric rise of Asians. Despite their relatively small proportion of the whole population, they are emerging in dominant numbers in higher education. Last year, for the first time, Asian undergraduate enrollment at UC-Berkeley surpassed that of whites, 35.2 percent to 34.5 percent. At UCLA, Asians have not surpassed whites in total enrollment, but they do outnumber whites among entering freshmen. At UC-Irvine, which specializes in engineering and science, Asians reached 41 percent of undergraduate enrollment, while white students were 35 percent. This is not surprising, since in 1992 over half of all Asian high school students took college preparatory curricula, while just a third of the white students were similarly aiming for college.

For more than 20 years faculty and administrators at all California institutions of higher learning have grappled with ways to instill an aspiration for higher education in minority high schoolers. Back in 1976, UC began "Early Academic Outreach" by which each campus sent staff and volunteers to work with students at schools that had the poorest rates of college admission, guiding them to the proper entry-level courses, tutoring and encouraging them. Last year, this program dealt directly with 56,000 students, according to Dennis Galligani, UC assistant vice president for student academic services. About half were considered ready for higher education when they left high school, many going to CSU and about 25 percent to community colleges.

Another successful effort by UC has been MESA — a program focused on math, engineering, science achievement — which began over 20 years ago at the urging of science faculty and has now spread to community colleges. It also is a mentoring and tutoring effort by university volunteers and staff, last year reaching some 18,000 students. Results have been good; students helped by MESA usually stick with college until graduation.

Some of the most successful outreach efforts have begun through individual teachers. One is AVID — the brain-child of an English teacher in San Diego in the '80s whose high school suddenly saw half its white, affluent, school-attuned pupils replaced by youngsters bused in from the inner city under a court order.

"We had two choices," recalls Mary Catherine Swanson, creator of AVID and now a top administrator in San Diego county's school system. "We could concentrate on remedial work for the minority youngsters. Or we could prepare them to cope with college-directed studies. The latter is what we set out to do."

Assuming that a motivated student could make it, the program's initials stand for "Advancement Via Individual Determination." Essentially, as a student works with tutors and peers in various special classes, he or she gains an enhanced sense of dignity and self-esteem. The program stresses written and spoken expression. Counseling is important, but the key component, which Swanson developed, was recruiting as tutors nearby college students who previously attended the high school. AVID students also work together, egging each other on, learning to ask questions and to

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prepare for class and tests. In 1992 San Diego found that 93 percent of the AVID students enrolled in college, most of them in a four-year schools. Today the AVID style of teaching is in 125 San Diego county schools, and in another 176 statewide.

Other efforts have cropped up statewide. In San Jose, two teachers at Chabot College were struck by the failure of so many ethnic minority students. Felix Galaviz, a counselor and assistant dean, and Patricia McGrath, an English teacher, hit upon the idea of linking students with individuals in the community from similar ethnic backgrounds to witness successful careers by people with whom they could identify: a Hispanic judge, an African-American librarian, a nurse, a physician, a store manager. Community members were eager to help. The community link was a key, so the program is called "Puente" — a bridge. Puente now is sponsored by UC, and the two innovators have been brought onto the UC president's staff. The program itself has spread across UC campuses and recently into community colleges. A $2 million gift from DeWitt Wallace-*Readers Digest* Fund will enable the UC team to expand to some 18 high schools in the next four years.

Not every innovation is so elaborate. At Claremont Colleges, for instance, one day a year is devoted to inviting fourth-grade children from local elementary schools to visit a campus, walk through admission and classroom experiences, get a cafeteria lunch, and the gift of a T-shirt boasting "I'm Going to College." In that one day, college students participate in implanting the notion that attending college is attainable.

An independent, privately funded organization in San Jose called the California Higher Education Policy Center seeks ways to respond to the increasing student population, hoping to keep faith in the 1960 dream that any youngster wanting college in California can find a niche. Disturbed by the effect of recent cuts in state funding for higher education, along with increases in student fees, it urges changes in university time schedules to reduce cost; for instance, teaching classes year-round, and on weekends and nights might fulfill the need for space without undertaking new construction. Another education reform center is under preparation at CSU-Sacramento, where former state Senator Gary Hart (D-Santa Barbara), long an expert on education, will preside over an institution looking especially at teacher training.

There are obstacles in the way of continued encouragement for minority access to higher education, however. The state's fiscal problems have meant recent cuts in budgets plus increases in student fees. These have been blamed for a decided enrollment drop last year, especially in community colleges and at CSU. The governor's 1995-96 budget promises a small improvement, as does the economic good news.

But another hazard is powerful public antagonism towards immigration, an outgrowth of the Proposition 187 campaign to bar illegal immigrants from schooling. Although the majority of Hispanic high school students are second- or third-generation Californians, the political alarms about illegal entries spill over into all ethnic concerns, and worry those in education.

There also have been some recent criticisms of minority student performance in college. CSU administrators have protested the amount of remedial work colleges must undertake with poorly prepared students who are admitted but are not up to expectations. This could build into a serious crisis over low-achieving pupils who seek higher education. In addition, a UCLA professor of education, Alexander Astin, said a nationwide study suggests a problem with "grade-inflation" at the high-school level.

Galligani says Astin's worry doesn't apply to California, while at UC-Berkeley, Greg Thomson, director of student research, said the success in educating students from lower socio-economic backgrounds can be proven "in objective test scores, in strictly professional evaluations. ...Compared to classes a decade ago, UC-Berkeley freshmen are substantially stronger from top to bottom."

But the tide of increasingly larger classes is swamping many remedial efforts. Said Barbara Brandes, who heads the state Department of Education's high school division: "We are at a point where individual student help is no longer a workable solution. Some systemic reform must be made in our school system. The big question is whether we must abandon the initial idea that formed our system in the '60s and had contributed so much to the state's economic advancement — the concept that every California child should have the chance to attend higher education, at one of the three levels the state provides. Or do we direct high school learning more towards job-training, which is likely to leave youngsters from low-income families headed for low-pay jobs. This is the issue on which debate is sharpest in educational circles today. It is a very disturbing time."

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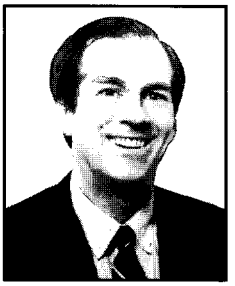
Soapbox

OPINION

School reform goes back to the ballot: An inside look at the 1996 California school reform initiative.

By Dr. Alan Bonsteel



Proposition 174, the school-choice initiative on the November 1993 ballot, was supposed to be the wake-up call that would spur much-needed reform of California's public schools, but it hasn't. California's public schools have failed to address the fundamental problems.

First, student performance levels remain disappointingly low; so low, in fact, that last November's meeting of the 20-campus California State University trustees was dominated by an angry discussion of why, in a system that accepts only the top third of high-school graduates, the number of college freshmen required to take remedial math and English courses has grown by at least 50 percent during the 1990s. At San Diego State, for example, more than 80 percent of freshman who took an entry-level math test this year failed.

Second, dropout rates remain unacceptably high. The "official" dropout rate often quoted by State Department of Education officials omits entirely dropouts at the middle-school level, thus understating the true rate by 3 or 4 percent. Currently, at least one California school child in five will fail to finish high school.

Third, California's public high schools have become truly dangerous places for students and teachers. Campus crime rates continue to soar. Even the most enthusiastic student has trouble learning in the unsafe environment offered by public schools.

Fourth, California's public schools are governed by a bewildering maze of federal, state, county and local mandates. At the state level, responsibility is further subdivided among the Legislature, the governor's office, the superintendent of public instruction, and the Board of Education. As of this writing, the new superintendent of public instruction — union-financed Delaine Eastin — and her election opponent — Maureen DeMarco of the Governor's Office of Education — were apparently refusing even to speak to one another, and Eastin was already embroiled in a dispute with the State Board of Education over who had authority to appoint her deputies. With no clear lines of authority, the public-education establishment has no hope of instituting any meaningful reform.

Finally, the public-school system is facing a fiscal crisis. Because of taxpayer discontent and Proposition 13, significant new revenue sources are probably out of the question. As if that weren't bad enough, we are facing a tidal wave of "mini-baby-boom" and immigrant children who will swell total public-school enrollment by one-third by the year 2000. Thus, in the absence of real reform that channels more money into the classroom and less into bureaucracies, class sizes, already far too high, will soar.

Defenders of public schools have blamed spending cutbacks for their shortcomings. Overall during the last two decades, however, per-student spending has increased by at least 40 percent in constant dollars. A 1993 *California Journal* article pegged the increase from the "Nation at Risk" year of 1983 to 1993 alone at 13 percent after adjusting for inflation (see "The Age of Turmoil and Hope," *CJ*, June 1993).

Although voucher advocates were disappointed with the 70-to-30 drubbing that Proposition 174 suffered, they took heart in the Luntz-Webber exit poll that showed three-quarters of California voters favoring school choice in principle, provided it results neither in new taxes or decreased current public-school per-student spending. Contrary to the opposition's assertions, these specifications are not hard to meet.

It therefore is hardly surprising that a growing movement is preparing a highly professional and well-organized educational reform initiative campaign for the March 1996 presidential primary ballot. San Diego businessman John Walton and San Francisco investment banker William Oberndorf have founded the American Education Reform Foundation and have provided seed money for drafting and passing a California ballot measure. Business consultant Gene Ruffin is directing the effort. Already in place is an enthusiastic and well-organized grass-roots organization intent on proving that, although a battle was lost with Proposition 174, there is still a war to be won.

Winner/Wagner and Mandabach Campaigns, a highly successful political consulting firm that specializes exclusively in ballot initiatives, is managing the public opinion research and initiative drafting. They are being assisted by Democratic pollster Fairbank, Maslin and Maulin and Republican attorneys Nielsen, Merksamer, Parrinello, Mueller & Naylor. In addition, the campaign team has tapped technical assistance from the nation's top academic experts on school finance and educational choice, including John Coons and Stephen Sugarman, professors of law at UC-Berkeley's Boalt Hall and strategists of the 1976 *Serrano* Supreme Court decision that brought equity in spending to California's school districts, and Terry Moe, a senior fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institute and co-author of "Politics, Markets, and America's Schools."

Time favors the reformers. The core supporters of the status quo — older voters who cling nostalgically to the way California's public schools were back in the golden age of the 1950s and early '60s — continue to diminish in importance as a voting bloc. Meanwhile, disillusionment with the quality of and violence in California's public schools grows.

Although the initiative campaign promises to be an expensive one, the Legislature clearly lacks the wherewithal to mount a comprehensive reform effort. With such a crucial issue as education at stake, the money will be well spent. The next voucher initiative will be far more refined, and the campaign much better financed and far more organized than the last. California faces the very real possibility of once again being the trendsetter in national politics.

Alan Bonsteel is a family practitioner from San Francisco, and has been a leader in the school choice movement for fifteen years.

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The Bottom Line

GOVERNMENT FINANCE

By Susan Rasky

Taxing Matters

Tax cuts being all the rage this season, it seems only fitting that Pete "back-from-the-dead" Wilson should want to underscore a stunning re-election victory by pushing one of his very own. And, to give the governor the benefit of the doubt, there is a reasonable economic case to be made for the phased-in 15 percent reduction in personal and business income tax rates he has proposed as part of the 1995-1996 budget. Whether it's a convincing case is another matter altogether, but the politics certainly make sense.

A Republican governor who may be running for president, or vice president, or favorite son in 1996 — or even a Republican governor who simply wants to make ideological atonement for pushing tax increases in 1991 — can hardly be blamed for seizing the state's first real upturn in revenues since the recession to score a few points with his voting base.

So what's a savvy Democratic opposition to do? Lieutenant Governor Gray Davis, in the party's official response to the Wilson proposal, offered a cautious, keep-all-options-open embrace of the tax cut idea. Yeah, the numbers are fishy, he seemed to be saying, but hey, Democrats love hard-pressed middle class families just as much as the next party.

That's all well and good in these early days of budget posturing. Let Democrats beat their left breasts and complain that the Wilson administration is rewarding the wealthy with tax relief while gutting spending that serves the needy. Let Republicans beat their right breasts and bemoan the high income tax rates that are keeping businesses out of California and threatening the chances for sustained prosperity. The revenue estimates and economic forecasts that really matter to the budget process won't be available until May anyway. And in an Assembly and Senate where voting margins are so narrow for both parties, the final budget deal, by necessity, is going to have to be one lulu of a compromise.

But in the meantime, it's a shame that neither party seems to have thought about the Wilson tax cut proposal as useful for some serious tax code restructuring and as the opening bid in a much broader deal to dismantle the Rube Goldberg machine that dictates fiscal policy in California.

Consider the perversities:

- For about a century, California operated under the principle that the state and its cities had separate interests. Cities were given authority to adopt charters that protected them from state interference in municipal affairs, and under a more complicated arrangement, counties were the agents for delivering state services.
- Proposition 13, quite apart from its impact on property tax rates and local revenues, took away the major local taxing authority by allowing the state to allocate the proceeds from the property tax within the counties.
- The structure that has replaced the relatively simple divisions of a century ago and now involves 58 counties, 482 cities and roughly 5000 special districts with separate taxing authority. One-third of those special districts are governed by existing entities, while two-thirds are completely independent.

Now consider the possibilities:

- Under provisions of a 1993 law, a 23- member bipartisan panel, known as the California Constitution Revision Commission, has quietly been meeting for the past seven months to "re-examine the state's system of governance" and recommend changes that would be put to the Legislature and voters. Loosely translated, that means two dozen essentially non-ideological policy wonks — some of whom are also politically astute office-holders — are trying to figure out how to untangle a state and local fiscal relationship in which lines of authority, responsibility and accountability are no longer discernable.
- If commission members are serious about their thankless task, the logical course is modification of Propositions 13 and 98, the rotted twin pillars that undergird the state's political and fiscal structure.
- Separately, segments of the business community and a loose amalgamation of liberal interest groups have been talking informally about tax code changes that would enhance investment in schools, transportation and other social infrastructure needed to make California a desirable place to live and work. Read here a recognition by both sides that low taxes mean little to business and workers if the schools stink.
- The Commission is scheduled to report its preliminary recommendations to the Legislature by August 1st. In other words, this yeasty mixture of policy and politics will be starting to rise when the Legislature is putting together the budget.

Fred Silva, the veteran Senate budget specialist who now serves as the Commission's executive secretary, looks at it this way: "The fundamental problem is how to develop a workable local tax base. You can't do that without looking at the state's tax base. Having a tax cut on the table has helped a little by focusing attention on the question of tax liability," he says. "If the two subjects don't exactly collide, at least they meet."

Silva is probably wise not to get ahead of his bosses, among them Russell Gould, Wilson's Finance Director and William Hauck, the Commission chairman. And Assemblyman Phil Isenberg (D-Sacramento), one of the commission members, concedes that highly theoretical discussions about a grand compromise do go on.

"From my point of view, the deal that's out there is a big tax cut, a fix in the sales tax, by which I mean you expand the base and reduce the rate," he says. "In other words, liberals have to get out of the mode of telling local governments where and how to spend, and conservatives have to get out of the mode of telling local governments they can't raise revenues. Both sides hate it, but that's the obvious trade."

But is the Commission the catalyst for getting that deal on the table? "The Constitution Revision Commission is not the Legislature," Isenberg says. "We should not be in the position of looking at short-term political decisions."

Since the Legislature as currently configured seems to be about the last place to look for long-term policy discussion in the next two years, that leaves only one political actor in a position to even think about brokering a mega-deal that might begin to rationalize the state's fiscal policy apparatus.

Hey, Pete, anybody home?

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Zev Yaroslavsky

Los Angeles' longtime contender finally climbs the ladder

How's this for the ideal political scenario: Longtime Los Angeles County Supervisor Ed Edelman makes the surprise announcement that he's not running for re-election. Then would-be contenders — among them, Democratic Senator David Roberti and state Assemblyman Richard Katz — drop out of consideration for replacing him. And there are no term limits or campaign contribution limits on county supervisors.

It's the ideal scenario if your name is Zev Yaroslavsky, the popular 19-year Los Angeles city councilman who in 1993 passed up — some say foolishly — running for mayor of the nation's second-largest metropolis. Yaroslavsky, whose electoral and fund-raising base is Los Angeles' affluent West Side, easily raised $700,000 and vanquished his little-known opponent, retired fire captain Don Wallace, in the June primary. The only excitement came when the slightly pudgy Yaroslavsky was caught, on camera, shirt-tails hanging out, taking some of his rival's signs down off power polls. He took office in December.

It's a far cry from Yaroslavsky's first election in 1975, run on a shoestring budget of $23,000. What little name recognition the underdog had came from being on TV, speaking at demonstrations sponsored by the Southern California Council for Soviet Jews, for whom Yaroslavsky ran a student outreach program. (He once was arrested at a protest during the performance of a Russian ballet troupe.) This was no slick operation. "During the campaign, we wanted to buy Zev a couple of shirts," recalls friend and fellow activist Si Frumkin. "He said, 'Why? I already have a shirt.'" He meant it literally.

Foreshadowing this year's race, then-City Councilman Edelman decided to run for county supervisor. Yaroslavsky took on two heavy hitters in the primary, Roz Wyman and Fran Savitch, both confidantes of Mayor Tom Bradley. He made it to the runoff and beat Savitch, who happened to be the wife of one of Bradley's principal financial backers. She was also the favored candidate of the emerging alliance of then-Assemblyman Howard Berman and Congressman Henry Waxman, who supported her out of deference to Bradley. Paradoxically, Yaroslavsky would become one of their key associates later in his political career.

Yaroslavsky left the council with the sometimes grudging respect of many in politics. He's probably the smartest member of the body, as well as one of its best orators. "He's the most articulate quote machine I've ever seen," says his former press deputy, Katharine Macdonald. Critics call him arrogant and thin-skinned. And even friends can get rattled by Yaroslavsky's intense persona. "He's a lot of fun off camera," says Council President John Ferarro. "But he never relaxes. It's always, fight, fight, fight."

Yaroslavsky's activist background sets him apart from most of his longtime colleagues on the council, although some of the more recent additions are veterans of '60s civil-rights struggles. "I'm an advocate," he says. "That's my style, and I'm not going to change." He likes to cultivate, on the one hand, an outsider role, sponsoring ballot initiatives and filling the council chambers with populist bluster. But on the other hand, he combines that with the insider's knowledge of budget arcana in a seemingly contradictory attempt to gain the respect of the establishment. Also in contrast to most other councilmembers, Yaroslavsky has spent his entire adult life in elective

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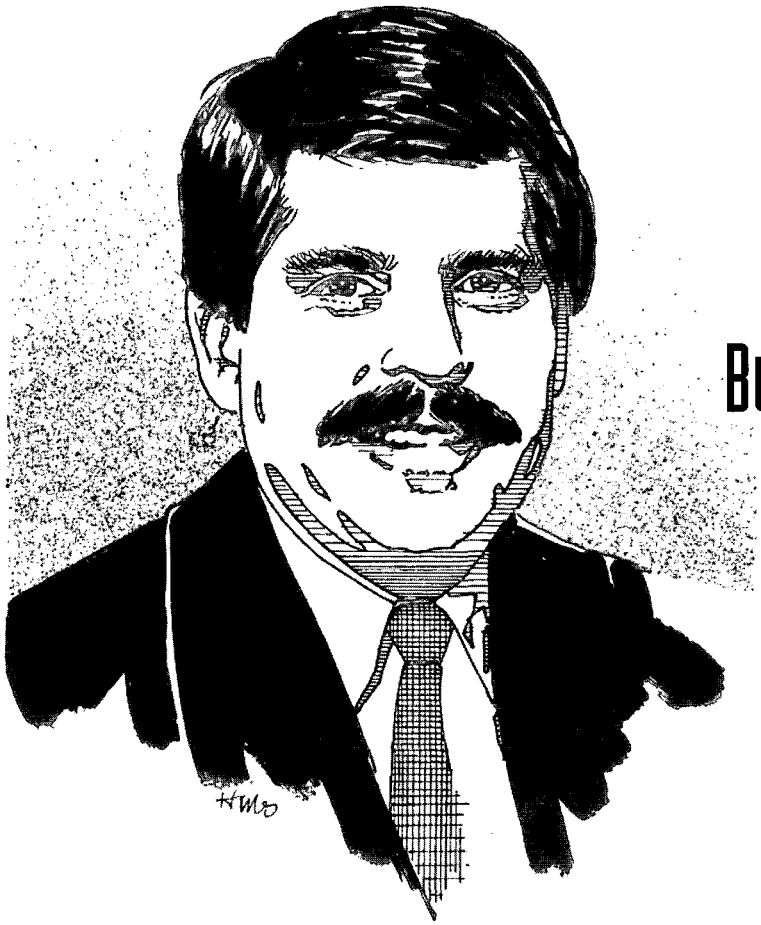

By Laureen Lazarovici

politics. Some say this has led to political caution, not about issues, but when it comes to his own career.

The ambitious Yaroslavsky seems to have come to terms with the fact that once-promising avenues are closing. He passed up running for mayor again in 1993 without giving it serious consideration. And although he's never made a secret about his congressional aspirations, he'd essentially have to wait for Henry Waxman to retire before making a move — an event that doesn't look like it's going to happen any time soon. Besides, as time passes, the prospect looks less attractive.

"In Washington, you need a lot of seniority to get things done," he says. "When I was 35, the idea of being a subcommittee chairman when I was 45 was fine. Now I'm 45 and have one of the most challenging jobs in politics in the U.S."

Some say the Board of Supervisors is the end of the political road for Yaroslavsky. After all, it hasn't been a good launching pad lately. Michael Antonovich tried to run for U.S. Senate and failed. Yvonne Brathwaite Burke did serve some time in Congress after her first stint on the board, but now she's back. Pete Schabarum, who retired several years ago, went on to sponsor the statewide term-limit initiative, but that's it. Even Gloria Molina's political career was limited by the board; she declined to run for mayor in 1993 because she felt she could not give up being a supervisor after serving less than two years of her term. Yaroslavsky seems resigned to this fate. "I'm not sure where it will lead," he says. "I'm not sure I want it to lead anywhere."

As chairman of the council's powerful budget and finance committee for the past 11 years, Yaroslavsky knows the city budget better than just about anyone. "He'll be sorely missed," says Ferarro, who concedes it will be difficult to replace Yaroslavsky when it comes to budget matters. "He's certainly left of center on taxes," says Joel Fox, president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers' Association, "but not way out there. He does turn to tax increases more quickly than we'd like." The latest was extending the telephone utility tax to cellular phones.

But Republican Mayor Richard Riordan, himself no tax-and-spend liberal, endorsed Yaroslavsky's candidacy and called him "one of the most tenacious and effective protectors of taxpayers' money."

Alongside this fiscally conservative record is Yaroslavsky's decidedly liberal legacy on social issues. He was, for example, only one of two white members of the council to vote against the majority in condemning busing in 1977. He and others count among his significant accomplishments reigning in the Los Angeles Police Department's Public Disorder Intelligence Division, its secret spying unit; and spearheading passage of

> Observers expect Yaroslavsky to be a key player on the five-member board practically from inauguration day.

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Proposition O, which beat back Occidental Petroleum's plans to drill for oil off the California coast. Yaroslavsky fought successfully for tenants' rights and increasing the number of women in the police department. He boasts about his co-sponsorship — with Councilman Marvin Braude — of Proposition U in 1986, which halved the allowable commercial building densities in the most crowded parts of the city. "Prop. U changed the way the city did business in terms of land use," says Yaroslavsky. "We took on the biggest lobby in town."

Ironically, despite this slow-growth rhetoric, development controversies have dogged Yaroslavsky throughout his political career. "I've been in all the battles and we haven't won many," sighs Sandy Brown, president of the Westside Civic Federation, a coalition of 17 homeowners' associations. She rattles off a long list of shopping malls, hotels and office buildings Yaroslavsky has supported that have burdened the Westside with traffic, noise and congestion. In 1989, Yaroslavsky faced a stiff re-election challenge from slow-growth activist Laura Lake. Even his own polling showed him to be vulnerable on the issue of taking campaign contributions from developers. He won with 63 percent of the vote — not a comfortable margin for a long-time incumbent. Lake ran against Yaroslavsky again last year, but got far fewer votes from a recession-weary electorate.

It's no coincidence, then, that a development controversy played a role in the councilman's abortive mayoral bid in 1989. Yaroslavsky supported the expansion of the Westside Pavillion, a huge mall in his district. But one day, Mayor Tom Bradley, who needed to bolster his popularity on the West Side, held a news conference to announce his opposition to the expansion. Yaroslavsky had been out-slow-growthed in his own backyard.

This was just one episode that pushed Yaroslavsky out of what could have been the race of his life, a contest that had the potential to change the face of Los Angeles politics. When first elected, Yaroslavsky started out as a key Bradley ally, who had swept into office thanks to a coalition of white liberal — especially Jewish — and Black voters. But that coalition was slowly unravelling, and Yaroslavsky increasingly found himself at odds with Bradley. The representative of the liberal Jewish West Side found plenty of support when he explored running, raising about a million dollars — or about as much as Bradley.

But there were setbacks. A bluntly worded memo from Yaroslavsky campaign advisers Michael Berman and Carl D'Agostino found its way onto the pages of the *Los Angeles Times*. "You've got 50 IQ points on him [Bradley] (and that's no compliment)," they wrote to their candidate. Meanwhile, Yaroslavsky's private polling showed Bradley still immensely popular. In January 1989 Yaroslavsky pulled out of the race. Scarcely two months later, newspapers began reporting on the ethical questions surrounding Bradley's ties to a bank that was doing business with the city. A severely weakened Bradley barely won 52 percent of the vote against two little-known opponents in the primary. The councilman's supporters, many of them former Bradley backers who risked their relationship with the mayor, began to mutter about how Yaroslavsky had blown his big chance. "I'm not a kamikaze

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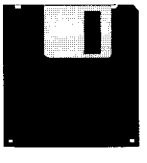

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pilot," says Yaroslavsky in his defense. "Based on the facts at the time I didn't think Tom Bradley was beatable. Some people think it was wimpish not to run. I say it was pragmatic."

Now Yaroslavsky steps into a seat that is more powerful, if less visible, than that of mayor. The five county supervisors each represent two million people, and together they oversee a chronically overburdened and byzantine $13 billion budget and 80,000 employees. In addition, each supervisor is a voting member of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority board, where Yaroslavsky had been a non-voting alternate appointed by the mayor. Until recently, the MTA had been viewed as the only government bureaucracy with any money to spend. Yaroslavsky calls it "a disorganized floating craps game," rife with questionable contracting, an operating deficit, high labor costs, and an overambitious capital program. "It is going from the frying pan into the fire," he says.

As supervisor, Yaroslavsky wants to bring some measure of sanity to the county budget. "Their budget documents are a shell game," says Yaroslavsky. "That makes it easier to shoot from the hip."

He proposes local taxes on liquor, guns and tobacco, with the revenue kept at the county to fund hospital emergency rooms. "The state has to allow us that right," he argues, citing current pre-emptions on these kinds of taxes. But he'd go farther, trying to keep just about all locally generated taxes. "The state has got to give counties some degree of predictability," he says. "The state should not be able to rip off property taxes. Maybe the vehicle license and sales tax could be protected. What's here now should be constitutionally protected." Yaroslavsky says he's willing to go to voters with a ballot initiative, as he has in the past, to get assurances to counties of state revenue flow.

Another Yaroslavsky priority is ethics reform, including a $250 limit on campaign contributions from those who do business with the county and full lobbyist disclosures. Currently, the county can barely force them to register. He has dubious claims as a reformer, however, given his opposition to the city's ethics proposal, which the voters passed in 1991. Ostensibly opposed to the public financing and pay raise for councilmembers built into the measure, Yaroslavsky used his own campaign funds to run an ads against it.

The race for Yaroslavsky's council seat

Zev Yaroslavsky's ascent to the L.A. County Board of Supervisors leaves open one of the prized political seats in the Southern California area: representing Los Angeles' 5th City Council District. Its core is the affluent, liberal and highly mobilized West Side, though reapportionments over the years have added more moderate parts of the San Fernando Valley.

Roberta Weintraub

The most intriguing entry is the former councilman's wife, Barbara Yaroslavsky, who has been active in Jewish community and education circles but is not well-known otherwise. Opponents grumble about creating political dynasties while conceding that Mrs. Yaroslavsky could win through name recognition alone.

Mike Feuer

But it won't be a walk. Competing for the Yaroslavsky liberal Jewish base is attorney Michael Feuer, former executive director of Bet Tzedek ("House of Justice") Legal Services, a post that Judge and one-time state Assemblyman Terry Friedman once held. The public-interest firm focuses on consumer fraud, nursing-home abuses and gaining restitution from Germany for Holocaust survivors. A Harvard Law School graduate, Feuer rounds out his liberal credentials with stints as a clerk for California Supreme Court Justice Joseph Grodin and issues director for Tom Bradley's 1986 gubernatorial campaign.

Vying for the center-right chunk of the electorate are Deputy District Attorney Lea Purwin D'Agostino and former school board member Roberta Weintraub. D'Agostino, who proudly boasts the nickname "Dragon Lady," once ran unsuccessfully for district attorney. With strong law-enforcement credentials, D'Agostino has the endorsement of the L.A. Police Protective League, the union representing cops. In a fit of sexist bluster, PPL pointedly refused to endorse *Barbara* Yaroslavsky in retaliation for *Zev* Yaroslavsky's opposition to a raise for police officers.

Lea D'Agostino

Weintraub gained political prominence in the 1970s as an activist trying to stop forced busing for school integration. This catapulted her to a seat on the L.A. Unified School District Board of Education for 14 years, where she gradually became more moderate on issues in general after the busing wars ended. In fact, one-time board colleague Jackie Goldberg, now a city councilwoman and perhaps the most liberal local elected official in L.A., is endorsing Weintraub.

A special election to fill the 5th District seat is scheduled for April 11th. If necessary, a runoff will be held in June.

— *Laureen Larzarovici*

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Observers expect Yaroslavsky to be a key player on the five-member board practically from inauguration day. "He's very visible," says anti-tax crusader Fox. "He's going to be a dominant force right away." Yaroslavsky has vowed to "shake up" the board, echoing Molina's campaign pledge when she ran and won in 1991. During his first week in office, he provided the critical winning vote to televise supervisors' meetings. But the fact that Molina hasn't been completely successful shows how difficult that can be.

Replacing Edelman, Yaroslavsky does not shift the ideological balance of the board; it remains a liberal 3-2 majority. Yaroslavsky, however, brings a more populist, energetic brand of liberalism than Edelman's. "I'm more socially progressive than any other member and more fiscally conservative than any member," says Yaroslavsky, who has recently indicated that he is open to contracting out some MTA work. "The Republican members [Supervisors Mike Antonovich and Deane Dana] don't know fiscal conservatism 'til they've seen me," he boasts.

Will the West Side liberal outflank the conservatives? "I would hope he would," says Antonovich.

Still, Yaroslavsky's most promising potential partnership is with Molina, who with Yvonne Brathwaite Burke forms the liberal majority. "We've worked well together [on the city council] and we've had our battles," Yaroslavsky says of Molina. The three could form a multi-racial coalition to serve as a model amid the county's fractious ethnic politics.

"Coalition building is the one unfulfilled area of Yaroslavsky's political promise. Being on the board puts him in a new, promising position," says Raphael Sonenshein, associate professor of political science at California State University, Fullerton, and author of "Politics in Black and White." "On the council he didn't have to form coalitions because he had such a solid base [in his own district], but now he has to — and it's a Black-Latino-Jewish one. If he can do that, he could help revive coalition politics in L.A. and help create new ones. Many people in these communities will be looking at that carefully."

But do the two tempestuous politicians, both extremely popular in their respective ethnic communities, have what it takes to pull it off? "Zev has an affinity of political style with Molina," continues Sonenshein. "But they are both pretty bright and pretty feisty. They could also rub against each other. It will be a mixture of personality and issues, and it's unclear whether they'll stick together. Burke is the most used to working in a consensus mode, and Molina is the most independent. Zev is in the middle."

In the meantime, the scrambling has begun to fill Yaroslavsky's City Council seat (see page 39). While his legacy on the council is unassailable, Yaroslavsky has a new and much more complex challenge ahead of him on the board. With the county growing more diverse, Yaroslavsky has the potential of playing a pivotal role in promoting inter-racial harmony by engaging his base of mostly liberal, Jewish voters in countywide issues. As Sonenshein puts it, "He needs to deliver his constituency to bigger coalitions."

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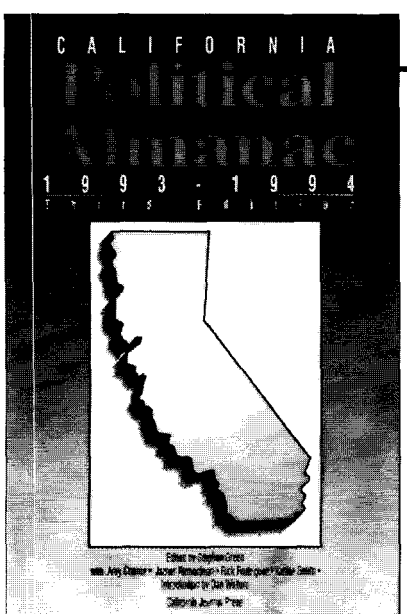

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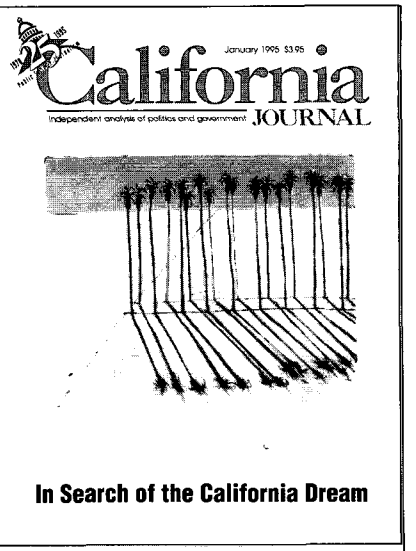

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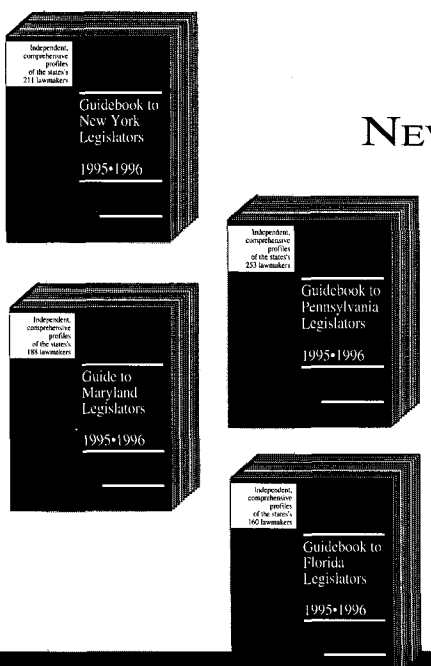
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Washington PERSPECTIVE

By Mark Z. Barabak

The new GOP Congress

Editor's note: The columns of veteran editor and reporter Larry Liebert have occupied this space for the past eight years. But Liebert has moved on to other endeavors (see "Washington Perspective," CJ, January 1995), and although his insights and musings will be missed, we look forward to filling this space with the work of a series of Washington-based correspondents who represent other California newspapers and news services. Thus, we present the first in this series, by Mark Z. Barabak of Copley Newspapers.

Power waxes and wanes with every election. But the shift that occurred November 8, 1994, is more rare than even a blue moon which, after all, occurs once every 32 months. The Republican takeover of Congress brought upheaval on an epic scale, with dramatic changes in everything from the legislative agenda to committee assignments to staff size — even the allocation of office space.

THE BOTTOM LINE FOR CALIFORNIA IS A SIGNIFICANT drop it its congressional clout, at least by the old, conventional standards.

"Clearly, a lot of people who had key leadership positions have been swept out of those positions by the change in control of the House," said Bruce Cain, associate director of UC-Berkeley's Institute of Governmental Studies.

The loss will be particularly acute, Cain said, for a state whose delegation mostly reaped its rewards through the power of a few well-placed committee chairmen, rather than the collective clout of its 52 House members. "It came down to a few individuals working very effectively for the state," Cain said, "not united work on the part of the Democrats, or of the whole congressional delegation."

Actually, California's biggest-in-the-nation delegation underwent a fairly minor shakeup, relatively speaking, on November 8th. Two of the three losing incumbents were freshman from opposite ends of the state — Democrats Dan Hamburg of Ukiah and Lynn Schenk of San Diego. The most senior of those ousted, Democrat Richard Lehman of Fresno, was preoccupied for most of his last term trying to position himself for re-election.

Almost as noteworthy was the survival of several seemingly vulnerable Democrats, most particularly Vic Fazio of Sacramento, Anthony Beilenson of Woodland Hills and George Brown of San Bernardino. All three were major powers in the last Congress and each faces a diminished role as part of the new Democratic minority.

For the 104th Congress, the California delegation will consist of 27 Democrats and 25 Republicans, a split more roughly akin to the state's partisan tilt. Before November 8th, the delegation consisted of 30 Democrats and 22 Republicans.

Over in the Senate, incumbent Dianne Feinstein barely withstood the megamillion-dollar challenge of Michael Huffington, and rejoins her fellow California Democrat, Barbara Boxer, for at least another four years in Washington. But in a further setback to California's clout, Feinstein lost her seat on the Appropriations Committee, a major boon to California during her first months in office.

The most important results, of course, were the national returns, which yielded a 27-seat Republican majority and turned control of the House over to the GOP for the first time since the Eisenhower years. As a result, five California committee chairmen were deposed: Oakland's Ron Dellums, who headed the Armed Services Committee; San Jose's Norman Mineta, head of Public Works and Transportation; Martinez's George Miller, head of Natural Resources; Brown, head of Science, Space and Technology; and Fremont's Pete Stark, who headed the District of Columbia Committee.

In their place, only one Californian will head a full committee — Republican Bill Thomas of Bakersfield, who will chair the internally focused House Oversight Committee. Republicans Jerry Lewis of Redlands and Ron Packard of Oceanside will also enjoy enhanced authority, as the heads of two Appropriations subcommittees.

BUT PERHAPS THE BIGGEST WINNER IN THE POWER shift is Republican David Dreier of San Dimas. Long active inside the GOP and a close ally of Speaker Newt Gingrich, Dreier was handed the Number Two slot on the vital House Rules Committee and a permanent seat at Gingrich's leadership roundtable. Also, Dreier has been appointed along with Lewis and Newport Beach's Christopher Cox to a special California task force that Gingrich formed at Governor Pete Wilson's urging. With power concentrated in the speaker's hands, Dreier said that sort of access far outweighs the clout formerly enjoyed by California's myriad committee chairmen. The old way of measuring clout — as pork, weighed by the pound — is no longer meaningful, he argued.

Voters no longer want Congress to function as "the disbursement office for federal largesse," Dreier said. "The focus is on returning power to the states, to local governments, and we're in the process of doing that."

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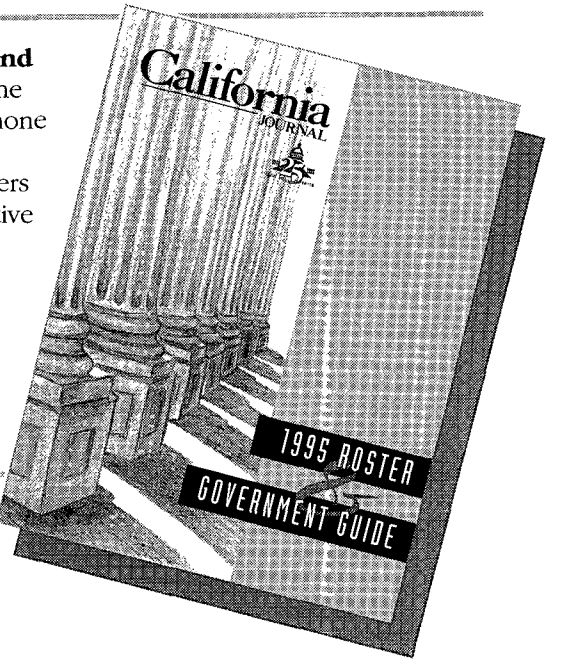

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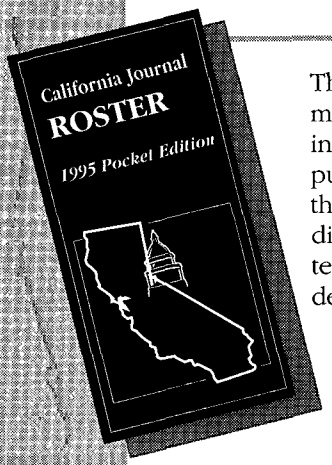

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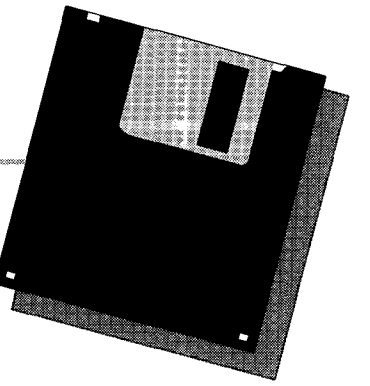

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